In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قال الله تعالى:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴾

Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification. (*Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* 33:33).

Prophetic traditions mentioned in both in Sunnī and Shī'ah authoritative reference books of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'an) have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively refer to the People of the Cloak [*ahl al-kisā'*], viz. Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn (*'a*) as the *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Household).

For instance, refer to the following references:

Sunnī

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), *al-Musnad*, 1:231; 4:107; 6:292, 304; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130; Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al.; Al-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), *Al-Dhuriyyah al-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108; Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 AH), *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā'*, 5:108; 113; Al-Ḥakīm al-Nayshābūrī (d. 405 AH), *Al-Mustadrak 'ala' ṣ-Ṣahīḥāyn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146-147; Al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH), *Al-Burhān*, p. 197; Ibn Hājar al-Asqalānī (d. 852 AH), *Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:104.

Shī'ah

Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, 1:287; Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), *Al-Imāmah wa' t-Tabṣīrah*, p. 47, *ḥadīth* 29; Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH), *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, pp. 35, 37; Al-Ṣādūq (d. 381 AH), *Al-Khiṣāl*, pp. 403, 550; Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH), *Al-Amalī*, *ḥadīth* 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following books of *tafsīr*: Al-Jassās (d. 370 AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH), *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*; Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Masīr*; Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), *Al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Tha'labī (d. 825 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Ṭabarī (d. 875 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*; Al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*; Al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Tafsīr*; Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Tafsīr*; Furt al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Tafsīr* at the margin of the exegesis of *Sūrat al-Nisā'* verse 59; Al-Ṭabarsī (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayān*, as well as many other sources.

THE ROLE OF
THE AHL AL-BAYT (‘a)
IN BUILDING THE VIRTUOUS COMMUNITY

BOOK ONE:
GOALS AND CHARACTERISTICS

قال رسول الله ﷺ:

"إني تارك فيكُمُ الثَقلين: كتاب الله، وعترتي أهلَ بيتي، ما إن تمسكتُم بهما لن تضلوا أبداً وأنَّهُما لَن يَفترِقا حتّى يردا عَليَّ الحوضَ"

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itratī*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some references:

- Al-Ḥākim an-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak 'alā'ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533
- Muslim, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book 31, *ḥadīth*s 5920-3
- At-Tirmidhī, *Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *ḥadīth*s 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219
- An-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, *ḥadīth* 79
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190
- Ibn al-'Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277
- Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209
- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 6, p. 199

Naṣīr ad-Dīn al-Albanī, *Silsilāt al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Ad-Dār aṣ-Ṣalāfiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358

THE ROLE OF
THE AHL AL-BAYT

IN BUILDING THE VIRTUOUS COMMUNITY

BOOK ONE:

GOALS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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BOOK ONE:
GOALS AND CHARACTERISTICS

PREAMBLE

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TRANSLITERATION SYMBOLS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	أ	a
ب	b	ت	t
ث	th	ج	j
ح	ḥ	خ	kh
د	d	ذ	dh
ر	r	ز	z
س	s	ش	sh
ص	ṣ	ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ	ظ	ẓ
ع	‘	غ	gh
ف	f	ق	q
ك	k	ل	l
م	m	ن	n
ه	h	و	w
ي	y	ة	ah
Long Vowels		**Short Vowels**	
آ	ā	ـَـ	a
و	ū	ـُـ	u
ي	ī	ـِـ	i
Persian Letters			
Symbol	**Transliteration**	**Symbol**	**Transliteration**
پ	p	چ	ch

ژ	**zh**	گ	**g**

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has given many scholars to the Muslim *ummah* who, following in the footsteps of Imāms of the Prophet's Household (*'a*), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defence of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that

appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shī'ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in edition and publication of the valuable works of leading Shī'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (*'a*) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣ*).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imām al-Mahdī, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Al-ḥakīm, the author of the present book, and Badr Shahin, its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office. ✍

Cultural Affairs Department

Ahl al-Bayt (*'a*) World Assembly

PREFACE
BY THE AHL AL-BAYT (‘A) WORLD ASSEMBLY

The Holy Messenger of Allah (¥)[1] is reported to have said,

أَقْرَبُ النَّاسِ مِنْ دَرَجَةِ النُّبُوَّةِ أَهْلُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِهَادِ.

The people closest to the rank of Prophets are the people of knowledge and jihad (utmost endeavor).[2]

Imam `Al¢ Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n (the Commander of the Faithful) (‘a) is also reported as saying,

اَلْعُلَمَاءُ بَاقُونَ مَا بَقِيَ الدَّهْرُ... أُولَئِكَ خُلَفَاءُ اللهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَالدُّعَاةُ إِلَى دِينِهِ، آهٍ آهٍ إِلَى شَوْقاً

The knowledgeable people are as endless as time. They are the representatives of Allah on the earth, and inviters to His religion. Oh! How eager am I to see them![3]

1- For maintaining readability, (¥) which is an acronym for “*¥all¡ all¡hu `alayhi wa ¡lih¢*” is used throughout the book to denote "May Allah bless him and his Household.”

2- Mu¦ammad al-Rayshahr¢ 3:2067.

3- *Nahj al-Bal¡ghah*, Saying No. 146, http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul/index.htm.

رُؤْيَـتِـهِمْ .

Peace and blessings of Allah and of His Apostle be upon the pure souls of the martyrs, especially the students of the Seminary (°awzah). Peace be upon the immortal men of religion who aroused enthusiasm in others, wrote down their academic and practical theses with their martyrdoms and the ink of their blood and transformed their lives into brilliant gems on the pulpits in order to guide others.

Peace and immortality be upon the martyrs and the spiritualists among the students of the °awzah who left their schools in order to join the fields of jihad, shed off any thing that connected them to worldly ambitions and set forth to join the immortal group of divine people.

Peace be upon those who unveiled true religious knowledge and became honest warners for their people, whose every act and intention testified practically to all parts of their discourses. In all honesty, the true men of the religion of Islam, and Sh¢`ism in particular, who guide others to the straight path and encourage them to tread the difficult path of truth ultimately become the foremost victims and seal their books of deeds with their blood.

Indeed, those who attended the classes of the spiritual masters of the °awzah have not been heard hoping for anything other than martyrdom, since they, having enjoyed the highest ranks of sincere connection with their Lord, always pray to Almighty Allah to confer martyrdom.[1]

It is now fourteen years since the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly was founded. Throughout this period, its one and only endeavor has been to spare no efforts in the propagation of Islamic culture and knowledge, defending

1- Im¡m al-Khumayn¢’s *Epistle to the Faculties of the Religious Studies*; Isphand, AH 1367 (February/March 1989 CE).

the sanctity of the Holy Qur'¡n and the Holy Sunnah[1], as well as the entity and the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt's[2] followers. By pursuing this goal, we hope to attain the rank aspired by the leader, the Grand ªyatull¡h Sayyid al-Kh¡mene'¢—may Allah perpetuate his blessings on us.

In view of the above, the Assembly has shown remarkable activity in the fields of Islamic research, inquiry, teaching, and propagation as well as many other related fields.

Taking upon itself the mission of honoring the scholars and those who devoted themselves to defending the genuine principles of Islam, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly is proud to hold a conference to honor martyr ªyatull¡h Sayyid Mu¦ammad B¡qir al-°ak¢m, the vice-chairman of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly.

It goes without saying that martyr ªyatull¡h al-°ak¢m was outstandingly well versed in both Islamic knowledge and policy not only in Iran and the Sh¢`ite world but also in the entire Islamic world. Unquestionably, his endeavors were the main impetus for the pressures that removed the Baathist regime that ruled Iraq so mercilessly.

1- The Holy Sunnah, being the second major reference of Islamic legislation, stands for the Prophet Mu¦ammad's words, acts, and confirmations.

2- The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) (People of the House) is a term dedicated to the family of the Holy Prophet (¥). More precisely, it is dedicated to definite individuals; namely, Imam `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±¡lib, F¡§imah al-Zahr¡' (the Holy Prophet's daughter and Imam `Al¢'s wife), al-°asan ibn `Al¢, and al-°usayn ibn `Al¢. The nine Immaculate Imams (namely, `Al¢ ibn al-°usayn al-Sajj¡d, Mu¦ammad ibn `Al¢ al-B¡qir, Ja`far ibn Mu¦ammad al-¯¡diq, M£s¡ ibn Ja`far al-K¡¨im, `Al¢ ibn M£s¡ al-Ri¤¡, Mu¦ammad ibn `Al¢ al-Jaw¡d, `Al¢ ibn Mu¦ammad al-H¡d¢, al-°asan ibn `Al¢ al-`Askar¢, and al-Mahd¢ the Awaited) are also among the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

This divine leader undertook the mission of spreading the Ahl al-Bayt’s culture through his wide-ranging activities that included teaching, writing and delivering lectures on various occasions. His writings, some of which have been published and others that are to be published in the future, stand as witnesses to testify to his efforts in these fields.

According to the saying that “the affairs of both religion and the world stand on two things—a pen and a sword behind the pen,” martyr ªyatull¡h Sayyid Mu¦ammad B¡qir al-°ak¢m was armed with both pen and sword. His pen is still overflowing with wisdom and knowledge that are like unsheathed swords waiting for a signal from him to fight again as they had previously fought against infidelity and challenged persecution and oppression.

A °ad¢th holds that the Holy Prophet (¥) said,

ثَلاَثٌ تَخْرِقُ الْحُجُبَ وَتَنْتَهِي إِلَى مَا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللهِ: صَرِيرُ أَقْلاَمِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، وَوَطْءُ أَقْدَامِ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ...

Three things penetrate the Veils (of Divinity) and stand directly before Almighty Allah. These are the susurrations of the scholars’ pens, the steps of the warriors (for the sake of Almighty Allah)... etc.

Correspondingly, the susurrations of martyr ªyatull¡h al-°ak¢m’s pen and his steps on the path of jihad were so well known in the east and the west of the globe that the gates of martyrdom were wide open before him. After twenty-five years of exile and alienation from his homeland, martyr Sayyid al-°ak¢m returned immediately after the collapse of the Baathist regime in Iraq. He aimed at residing in the vicinity of the holy shrines of his immaculate forefathers, living amongst the Iraqi people who were severely tormented and persecuted, reconstructing all that was demolished by the infidels and transgressors.

From the sacred minbar (i.e. pulpit) of the Congregational Friday Prayer, he delivered sermons full of admonition and guidance to spread awareness among the faithful. Thus, the people's love for him augmented day by day. Unfortunately, this brilliant lantern was extinguished by the harbingers of gloom who could not tolerate such luminosity. They stretched forth their treacherous hands to end his life immediately after he had finished his prayer on Friday beside the holy mausoleum of his forefather, Imam `Al¢ Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n (‘a). Sayyid al-°ak¢m embraced the great victory of martyrdom after an extraordinary journey, full of strife. In truth, Sayyid al-°ak¢m did not die, because martyrs are forever alive and provided sustenance from their Lord. Although we can no longer see the person of Sayyid al-°ak¢m, he is present with us constantly illuminating our lives.

The Grand ªyatull¡h Sayyid al-Kh¡mene'¢ said about Sayyid al-°ak¢m,

> “This dear martyr was both a scholar and a warrior (for Islam). He challenged the oppressive regime of Saddam for many long years. When this sign of evil and transgression collapsed, Sayyid al-°ak¢m acted as an invincible wall in the face of the occupiers—the Americans and the English. He resisted ill-omened plans and prepared for martyrdom in the long path of jihad to join the caravan of martyrs from the family of al-°ak¢m along with other martyrs of knowledge and virtue in Iraq.”

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly, in co-operation with other foundations, held a conference on the anniversary of the passing of this ‘martyr of the prayer-niche’ (*shah¢d al-mi¦r¡b*), ªyatull¡h Sayyid Mu¦ammad B¡qir al-°ak¢m, on the eighteenth of Rajab, 1425 AH, in Tehran, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This conference was attended by

a group of eminent Muslim scholars who delivered speeches for the occasion.

The consequent activities of the Cultural Committee of this conference can be classified in two sections:

The first section: Reprinting a group of the writings of Sayyid al-°ak¢m, as follows:

(1) The two-volume book entitled, ‘*dawr ahl al-bayt f¢ bin¡' al-jam¡`ah al-¥¡li¦ah' (The Role of the Ahl al-Bayt in Building the Virtuous Community).*

(2) The book entitled, ‘*al-wi¦dah al-isl¡miyyah min man¨£r al-thaqalayn' (Islamic Unity from the Perspective of the Two Weighty Things—i.e. the Holy Qur'¡n and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)).*

(3) The book, ‘*`Ul£m al-Qur'¡n' (Sciences of the Qur'¡n)* in cooperation with the Assembly of Islamic Thought (*Majma` al-Fikr al-Isl¡m¢*).

(4) The book entitled, ‘*Tafs¢r S£rat al-°amd' (Exegesis of the Opening Chapter)* in cooperation with the Assembly of Islamic Thought.

(5) The book, ‘*al-Qa¥a¥ al-Qur'¡n¢*’ (*Narratives of the Qur'¡n*) in cooperation with the International Center for Islamic Studies (*al-Markaz al-`ªlam¢ li'l-Dir¡s¡t al-Isl¡miyyah*).

(6) The book entitled, ‘*al-Ukhuwwah al-«m¡niyyah*’ *(Brotherhood-in-faith)* in cooperation with D¡r al-Ghad¢r Foundation.

(7) The book, ‘*Thawrat al-°usayn*’ *(The Revolution of Imam al-°usayn (‘a))* in cooperation with Imam al-°usayn (‘a) Foundation.

Second Section: Preparation and distribution of compact disks (CD's) comprising Sayyid al-°ak¢m's books, which will be offered at the conference. The CD will include:

(1) The life account of martyr ªyatull¡h Sayyid Mu¦ammad B¡qir al-°ak¢m by the Approximation of the Islamic Sects Assembly (*majma` al-taqr¢b bayna al-madh¡hib al-isl¡miyyah*)

(2) The book entitled, '*al-Arba`ata `Ashara Man¡hija wa Ru'¡*' *(Fourteen Methods and Standpoints)* by the Foundation for Printing the Writings and Works of Martyr ªyatull¡h al-°ak¢m, in cooperation with the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly.

(3) The book entitled, '*Shuhad¡' al-`Ilm wa'l-Fa¤¢lah f¢'l-`Ir¡q*' *(Martyrs of Knowledge and Virtue in Iraq)* by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly. This book comprises the life accounts of 120 Iraqi scholars who were martyred. It is presented in two languages—Arabic and Persian.

(4) A complete collection of Sayyid al-°ak¢m's writings and works

Finally, I express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all the cultural and executive offices that have extended aid in holding this conference and all their esteemed representatives who have participated in the preparatory sessions and meetings for the conference.

I pray that Almighty Allah lead all the adherents of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to greater success and include them all among the helpers of His Representative, the Patron of the Age, Imam al-Mahd¢—may Allah hasten his relief.

Mu¦ammad °asan Tashayyu`
Cultural Assistant of the

Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and all blessings be upon the Master of Prophets, Mu¦ammad, and upon his Immaculate Household.

Significance of the Ahl al-Bayt's Thesis

The Ahl al-Bayt's principles for building a virtuous community are seen as some of the most important of all guidelines in the Islamic mission, since they cover all aspects of human life—doctrinal, intellectual, cultural, historical, and social. This is because the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are the extension of Prophethood in the form of Imamate (divinely commissioned leadership). They are also the ‘men of authority' for whom obedience, loyalty and love has been imposed upon all of us by Almighty Allah.[1] The Holy Prophet (¥) in his famous *Tradition of Thaqalayn* described the Holy Qur'¡n as the ‘*major weighty thing*' and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as the ‘*other weighty thing*' that never forsakes the Holy Qur'¡n.

Moreover, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are the most learned in the sciences of the Holy Qur'¡n as they explain, elucidate, expound upon, unveil hidden points, and extract its

1- This fact has been practically and theoretically explained with evidence in my first book ‘*al-Imāmah*' *(The Divinely Commissioned Leadership).*

treasures. They are also the bearers of the Holy Sunnah in all its details and examples. They thus know the actual interpretations of Qur'¡nic verses and Prophetic sayings in their present and future contexts.

They are also the most virtuous patterns of uprightness, patience, broad-mindedness, and nobility of character. They tread the right course by inviting to the path of Almighty Allah with wisdom and excellent preaching, practice true striving (i.e. jihad) by sacrificing their souls and properties for Almighty Allah, and are always ready to give up everything, be it precious or not, in the course of defending truth and justice and fighting oppression.

On account of these characteristics, the Holy Qur'¡n has referred to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) thus:

ڈ ڈ ڈ ژ ژ ژ ک ک ک

Allah only desires to keep away impurity from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying. (33/33)

Because they undertook the burdens of their responsibilities in an extraordinary way, responding to all objections and allegations with absolute nobility and integrity, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were documented, both in history and in the Muslim community, to have an effective and influential role that cannot be disregarded.

Their splendid achievements in all fields of life—spiritual, political, scientific, and moral—and their unrelenting support of Islam and Muslims in their encounters with enemies within and without—including deviant rulers, hypocrites, political opportunists, miscreants, heretics, deceivers, iniquitous scholars, Jews, Christians, and mischief-makers—are undeniable historical facts.

Ahl al-Bayt (‘a): The Most Important Pillar

Such correlated aspects and features confirm the significance of this Islamic philosophy and, at the same time, explain various references in traditions reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as well as other citations and assertions by the Holy Qur’¡n. Such Qur’¡nic verses and traditions reveal the fact that the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) stand for one of the essential pillars on which Islam is founded if not the most important of all these pillars.

This distinctive and special rank of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is a truth almost unanimously agreed upon by all Muslims even though they have disagreed on many details concerning the profundity of this fact.

In addition to many authentic and uninterruptedly transmitted traditions, this fact can be plainly observed through the feelings of love, appreciation, submission, and loyalty that all Muslims—except the Naw¡¥ib[1]—have for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), even though biographies and historical events show that all the ruling dynasties were against their political and spiritual influence. This fact alone acts as the strongest evidence on the lucidity and intelligibility of their guidance. For many centuries, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were continuously exposed to murder, banishment, and material and mental siege at the hands of the Umayyad, `Abb¡sid, and Ottoman ruling authorities. It was expected that such persecution would isolate, if not eradicate, both their school and them from Islamic society. However, in spite of all the persecution faced by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), they have always

1- Naw¡¥ib (pl. of N¡¥ib¢) are those who openly declare enmity to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and to their partisans. Addressing the Sh¢`ah, Im¡m al-¯¡diq (‘a) defined a N¡¥ib¢ as one who shows enmity to the followers of the Holy Imams.

enjoyed a remarkable and sacred position among Muslims. Unmistakably, the one and only reason for the perpetuation of their special position is nothing but the divinely-supported fact that the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) represent one of the roots of Islam, and having been confirmed by both the Holy Qur’¡n and the Holy Sunnah, all Muslims accept it. The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) offered Islam and the Muslims illustrious services that have been preserved by history despite all opposing factors.

Besides this, the inclination of Muslims toward the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) explains the large number of theses, books, and writings written by Muslim scholars of various sects that deal with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). In addition to these works, Muslim scholars of various sects have openly confessed this fact in the major reference books of Muslim jurisprudence (*fiqh*), exegesis of the Holy Qur’¡n (*tafs¢r*), traditions (°*ad¢th*), and history as well as other fields of knowledge. The books that contain this reality are too many to mention in a single volume.

This historical phenomenon (of the unanimity of all Muslims recognizing the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to be the most virtuous exemplars in the Muslim society throughout history) cannot be explained except on the basis of the creed that the Twelver (*ithn¡-`ashariyyah*) Sh¢`ah believe about the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). This creed entails that the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is the ‘fundamental pillar’ on which Islam and the final Divine Message rests, which Almighty Allah has promised to protect and maintain.

Thus, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) represent the natural extension and continuity of the Divine Message although such extension has not been described as prophethood, since the Holy Prophet (¥) is reported to have said to Imam `Al¢ (‘a):

أَنْتَ مِنِّي
بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ
مِنْ مُوسَى إِلاَّ
أَنَّهُ لاَ نَبِيَّ
بَعْدِي.

Your position to me is the same as the position of (Prophet) Aaron (‘a) to (Prophet) Moses (‘a) except that no Prophet will come after me.

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are thus the interpreters of the Holy Qur’¡n and bearers of the Prophetic Traditions in all their details. They are also an extension of divinely commanded responsibility because they are the true guides, the manifestations of piety, the couriers of the message of the Holy Messenger (¥) and the authorities after him.

Just as this final Divine Message is predestined to live and perpetuate, so also will the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) necessarily continue to live and perpetuate in order to influence the Muslim community—a fact that cannot be denied by any researcher no matter how unreasonable be his contention and refusal to face facts.

Actuality of the Ahl al-Bayt’s Role

An important question needs to be answered in this regard: What role did the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) play in the lives of Muslims that caused them to obtain such an enviable position in the Islamic mission and in the spiritual and social lives of Muslims?

In answer, it is necessary to mention two major roles of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a):

First: They played the role of vicegerency (wil¡yah) and representation of the Holy Prophet (¥) after his departure.

Second: They played the role of intellectual and religious authorities as regards understanding the Divine Message and all its details.

The majority of theses and studies that have dealt with this

subject matter have, in one way or another, concentrated on these two major issues. However, to restrict the role of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to these two major issues—not denying their great significance from a hypothetical aspect and from the general view of the Islamic mission—creates a substantial problem from the external, practical aspect. This problem restricts this ‘most important pillar’ of Islam to an academic role minus a political one. The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were sidelined and not allowed to perform their divinely ordained duties, such as undertaking the role of the Holy Prophet’s vicegerency and representation, except for the few years of political rule of Imam `Al¢ and Imam al-°asan (‘a). Similarly, the role of the Ahl al-Bayt as intellectual and religious authorities has not been internalized by all Muslims except in an extremely limited way. Only the Twelver Im¡miyyah follow their teachings and guidance as was meant to be.

Compounding this problem is the fact that the majority of studies that have dealt with these two major matters have paid no attention to the vital role that such vicegerency and authority would have played in the infancy of the Islamic society. Neither have they pointed out the relationship between this vicegerency and authority, the divine message of Islam and other divine religions and their sacred goals. It is essential to mention the fact that the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) themselves, through sayings and traditions, always brought to the fore the significance of this vital role and relationship.

Development of Studies about the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

In order to explain the status of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in the Islamic philosophy, we are in urgent need of a ‘special approach’ in our research and study of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). We need to reveal and explain all the aspects of their role

in building the Islamic state, and highlight the relationship between these aspects and Islamic philosophy.

It seems essential to refer to a number of aspects that need to be included in these studies:

First: These studies need to explain the purpose behind establishing the concept of leadership in the message of Islam and the consequent role of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). The principle of Islam, being the seal of all divine religions, should be explained and supported with evidence that shows this religion has successfully demonstrated all principles and goals in a practical way, be they specific or general.

Second: These studies need to explicate the correlation between this most important pillar and the other pillars to reveal the perfection of the pillars of Islam, and the harmony of its structure, goals, and success.

Third: These studies need to clarify the correlation between the distinctive doctrinal and intellectual premises of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School which lead to an understanding of Islam—an understanding that is based on the concept of the divinely commissioned leadership (i.e. Imamate) of the Holy Imams (‘a) and their vital role in the lives of Muslims.

For instance, such advanced studies are expected to demonstrate the correlation between Imamate and *`i¥mah* (inerrancy of the Holy Infallibles[1]), *taqiyyah* (pious dissimulation), *shaf¡`ah* (right of intercession), *ta'w¢l* (interpretation of the sacred texts), *bad¡'* (conversion of a judgment due to a change in the prevailing interests),

1- The Holy Infallibles, in the Sh¢`ite terminology, are the Holy Prophet, Lady F¡§imah al-Zahr¡', and the twelve Imams (‘a).

khumus (the one-fifth tax in profits), and *zaw¡j al-mut`ah* (temporary marriage).

They must also answer the question of whether controversy among Muslim schools of thought is purely doctrinal and jurisprudential (that is, dependent upon the understanding of each school regarding a certain statute) or there is an apposite correlation between such issues and the original Islamic philosophy, which has resulted in dividing the Muslim community.

Fourth: These studies need to shed light on the theoretical and practical correlation between the multifaceted situations, activities, and aspects that the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) undertook in the various ages of the Islamic community in the interest of the supreme goals of Islam. Although it is an undeniable fact, we must suppose that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), as interpreters of the Divine conception and pattern of the final Divine Message, possess a cohesive perspective of ideas, events, and social facts (i.e. actual interests and risks). Hence, they have been just like the prophets who would agree with each other in perspectives, words, deeds, and situations if they were to live in the same age.

However, from one time to another, we stumble upon an obvious dissimilarity in the *forms* of these situations. At other times, we notice such dissimilarity even in words, behavior, course, and method—the same thing that can be noticed in the Holy Qur’¡n regarding the prophets themselves. Such being the case, we have to find a convincing answer to the following question: What is the common factor that can be inferred from the words, deeds, situations, and behavior of those divinely appointed individuals, on the basis of which all such dissimilarities are justified reasonably?

Undoubtedly, the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and the efforts of the scholars following them can together form a vital heritage to sustain such advanced studies.

One of the most important efforts for widening the scope of studies about the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are those of the great Muslim thinker and martyr, Sayyid Mu¦ammad B¡qir al-¯adr—may Allah be pleased with him—who inaugurated involvement in such studies through his writings and lectures. Unfortunately, his work could not be completed in quantity and quality because of his assassination by the ruling authorities of the Baathist regime in Iraq.[1]

Such research requires extensive preliminary studies that institute an extensive encyclopedia on the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Moreover, it must analytically dissect “the intellectual, historical, ethical, and doctrinal heritage” inherited from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and found in the reference books of °ad¢th (reported traditions), tafs¢r (exegesis of the Holy Qur’¡n), ethics, du`¡' (supplications), and ziy¡rah (prescribed verses addressed to holy persons while visiting their shrines or from a distance).

Studies in the fundamentals of Muslim jurisprudence (i.e. *u¥£l al-fiqh*) are advanced, and there is tangible progression in the

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1- In 1980, the ruling regime of Saddam murdered Sayyid Mu¦ammad B¡qir al-¯adr and his virtuous sister, Bint al-Hud¡, whom were found guilty of nothing except steadfastness on their principles. This was not Saddam’s first crime. He murdered thousands of true virtuous believers in a wide-ranging scheme aimed at eradicating the Islamic existence in Iraq. This scheme continued for more than seventeen years.
(*Translator’s comment*: In fact, Saddam’s crimes against the Islamic tendency in Iraq did not stop until the collapse of his dictatorial regime in 2003.)

fields of fiqh (Muslim jurisprudence), *u¥£l al-fiqh*, *`ilm al-rij¡l* (science of the biographies of narrators), and tafs¢r. However, studies in the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) with respect to these fields are stagnant and inactive. In plain words, studies in this field remain unattended as compared to studies in the other fields of Islamic sciences.

Without such development, all theoretical research in this field will rest upon the raw material available, which suffers from an intermixture of the authentic and the unauthentic, the conditional and the unconditional, the general and the specific, the decisive and the allegorical, etc. Likewise, studies in this field will depend upon the classic scientific results arrived at by past scholars. In point of fact, these results, though of great importance and scientific value, are intuitive, since they were deduced under certain circumstances and with partial perspectives. Hence, what is required is that a research-oriented group of scholars, since it cannot be done by one person, undertakes this essential work by resuming studies in the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to establish a general concept in this regard, acceptable to all schools of thought.

Prospects for Research on Heritage of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

In the face of all such scientific and objective difficulties, I found myself, a few years ago, engaged in a simple attempt to write about this theoretical aspect. In the international foundational conference of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly, I wrote an essay expressing an attempt to put forth some of the general concepts of this theory. I received some encouragement—that I do appreciate—from some participants.

Correspondingly, I believed that the most important step in this regard was to take the initiative and carry on presenting this theoretical aspect with the hope that it (i.e. the

theoretical aspect) would perhaps reach the hands and minds of other researchers and scholars.

Such preoccupation was completely different from, if not contrary to, engaging in cultural and intellectual activities, and I had to stay away from the centers of scientific activities; namely, the °awzah, and from its ambience and services provided therein. In spite of all this, I tried my best to review and analyze my work. By doing so, a number of points that represent major items necessary for this research surfaced:

- Presentation of the theoretical and practical existence of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in the final Divine Mission which would emphasize the shared aspects of the Holy Imams (‘a)
- Presentation and explanation of the situations of each Imam during his own age and presentation of the principles applied by him to every situation as being always in keeping with the main goals of Islam. This also required a classification of the history of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) into distinct phases and stages with all their peculiarities clarified.
- Spelling out the intellectual, doctrinal, and legal issues by which the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School is characterized and the relationship between these issues and the Islamic theory as interpreted by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). It is worth mentioning that our scholars have fully researched the theological and jurisprudential aspects in the study of these issues.
- Chronological documentation of the efforts of the Ahl al-Bayt’s followers after the occultation of Imam al-Mahd¢—may Allah hasten his advent—along with major stages that have been accomplished and their roles in undertaking this

huge responsibility. This will be the study of 'The Virtuous Referential Religious Authority'.

The Ahl al-Bayt's Role in Islamic Life

I have also observed that the first study, being the key and the major work, requires covering a number of theoretical and practical researches so significant that each of them requires an independent book. The goals of the thesis on the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) can however be summarized in the following points:

(1) Establishing the (divine) proof and witnessing the human response

(2) Divine vicegerency; that is, the general religious management or the leadership of the Islamic government

(3) Intellectual and religious authority of Muslims

(4) Embodiment of perfection for the individual and the entire society

(5) Defense of Islam, which includes defense of the Islamic doctrine and political entity

(6) Defense of the Muslim community (terminologically, *ummah*) and the maintenance of its existence, characteristics, and unity

(7) Building a virtuous community and distinctive individuals who can undertake its responsibilities

Before thrashing out these points, there is in fact need for shedding light on and explaining the conception of the divine Imamate (leadership) of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in the light of the Islamic mission. This Imamate is the center around which all other roles and missions revolve. There is another need to demonstrate why this phenomenon is

exclusively found in the Islamic mission.

Without a doubt, to work on all these disciplines requires much time, appropriate devotion, and availability of a number of suitable assistants.

Despite the difficulties, I found myself diving into this virtuous work; therefore, I put all my trust in Almighty Allah and sought His help as I betook myself to Him with pure intention and sincerity in the hope that He would guide me to what is right in this respect, as He has promised, saying:

ۀ ہ ہ ھ ھ ے ے ۓ ۓ ڭ ڭ ڭ ۇ ۇ ۆ

And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Lo! Allah brings His command to pass. Allah has set a measure for all things. (65/3)

I have also found myself beginning by writing about the seventh goal, namely the building of a virtuous community. The reason for selecting this topic to begin with might have resulted from my feeling that there is a tangible need for the existence of a perfect notion of a virtuous community in theory and practice, which can provide an actual pattern for those who are engaged in the fields of political and social activities to take as an example and follow.

This study, I feel, would fill a gap found in the curricula of religious studies. It would also have efficacy for religious preachers and missionaries as well as faithful educated individuals in Islamic homelands and in countries of emigration, where such people cannot easily obtain the sources to acquaint themselves with the details of this concept.

Nowadays, our Islamic world is witnessing great progress in Islamic seminaries, propagational activities, general education of Islam, and emigration to the Western

countries. This book will thus present to people involved in these activities greatly needed general information about Islam for their discourses, i.e., knowledge about the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and guiding concepts for the foundation of a virtuous community.

More than all else, I personally believe that we are in urgent need of presenting the actual, external pattern of a virtuous community through the existence and application of which Islamic theory can be actualized and not remain in the hypothetical arena in the midst of this self-seeking world.

Some Difficulties

Prior to the writing of this book, I composed in my mind the general concept I would discuss. I then started writing and encountered a number of difficulties, two of which are mentioned as follows:

The First Difficulty was time: It was difficult to find enough time to write the book; therefore, I had to use a portion of the time I had dedicated to other work. In view of this, on occasion, I had to interrupt the writing of a particular idea for a period of several months and even a whole year; therefore, when I came back to writing, I was forced to begin certain ideas over again, especially taking into consideration the theoretical nature of the work. At other times, I had to stop citing the references of the texts to save time, which caused problems in the preparatory stages of printing the book due to additional effort required for excerpting the unreferenced texts, which was done by some brothers working in the *Ris¡lat al-Thaqalayn* Magazine issued by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly. Seizing this opportunity, I do appreciate and thank all such efforts.

The Second Difficulty was that this research essentially depended upon raw materials, such as traditions reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), historical and jurisprudential texts, and the biographies of reporters. All such material requires revision, comprehension, examination of the trustworthiness of reporters, and then comparison with each other to deduce the theory. Of course, all these efforts were time-consuming. Owing to the existence of encyclopedias of traditions and reference books of biographies compiled by our scholars—may Allah endue them with the best rewards—I was able to inch ahead.

As I realized that this method was neither adequate nor effective, I resorted to the method of delivering lectures, albeit in an interrupted manner, and then making corrections and referring details to their sources. It is true that this method is not as accurate as writing, but it can be useful in enkindling additional ideas and maintaining the origins of others.

Arrangement of the Books

In this book, I have observed the following steps:

The book has seven sections, each of which comprises independent chapters and sub-chapters. The sixth and seventh sections of the book comprise more sub-chapters.

The first section of the book is composed of two chapters: “goals” and “characteristics.”

The second section, which deals with “the principles and foundations of building a virtuous community”, is composed of chapters discussing the “intellectual”, “ethical”, “cultural”, “spiritual-mental” and “politico-social” principles and foundations, respectively.

The third section, which deals with “the general system of

community", is composed of chapters about "the referential religious authority", "the identity of the virtuous community", "the nation's relationship with the religious authority" and "the internal and external relations".

The fourth section, which deals with "the security system of the virtuous community", is composed of two chapters: "security lines" and "security policies".

The fifth section, which deals with "the economic system of the virtuous community", is composed of chapters about "general laws of economics", "private laws of economics" and "economic activities".

The sixth section, which deals with "the system of social relations of the virtuous community", has two parts: "dimensions and foundations of the theory" and "superstructure of the theory". The first part is further divided into two chapters: "aspects of the theory" and "foundations of the theory". The second part is composed of two chapters: "superstructure and features of the theory" and "superstructure and foundations".

The seventh section, which deals with "rituals and acts of worship", is the largest among these sections. It is composed of two parts: "rituals" and "acts of worship". The first part is made up of three chapters: "rituals of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)", "devotional acts for days and nights" and "mosques and holy places". The second part is also made of chapters all of which deal with "timed acts of worship" and "untimed acts of worship". The chapters of "timed acts of worship" are four: "daily acts of worship", "weekly acts of worship", "monthly acts of worship" and "yearly acts of worship". The chapters of "untimed acts of worship" include "prayers", "fasting", "supplication", "*dhikr*" and "jihad".

On many occasions, these sections, chapters, and sub-

chapters include preambles intended to introduce the topic and present its significance or epilogues that comprise conclusions or summaries of the ideas according to the impact of the topic, the extent of research, or other needs for such epilogues.

Perhaps, this order of sections and chapters might seem odd at first because it does not correspond with the usual order followed in books on similar topics. In addition, the titles of some sections and chapters may seem unprecedented. Yet, the unfamiliar nature will definitely vanish when the book is read, especially when the points mentioned are taken into careful consideration.

Second, the main purpose of this book is to manifest the practical role of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) in the formation and construction of a virtuous community and the establishment of a theory about this topic, followed by a demonstration of the features and details of such a virtuous community.

This matter will be helpful for the virtuous community as well as all other Muslims who seek the truth in order to commit themselves to it. Likewise, it will also be beneficial for all truth-seeking researchers.

Third, after demonstrating this theory, the book will attend to and concentrate on the distinctive features of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) School, without delving into common points that explain and mention details of causes and effects. Rather, a swift reference will be made to such points which, though very important at times, have been discussed in detail in general researches of Muslim scholars; therefore, as they can easily be obtained from other sources and would take this book away from its specific goal, only a quick reference is necessary.

Fourth, special attention has been devoted to the inference of the features of this theory from primary references

(namely, the Holy Qur'¡n, the Holy Sunnah, and the authoritative texts reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) regarding the reporting, explanation, and elucidation of the Holy Sunnah). In addition to these, the Ahl al-Bayt's reported texts that interpret the details of the policies, courses, methods, and situations appertaining to this theory have been mentioned.

Fifth, because the inference of this theory involves accurate *ijtih¡d*[1] dependent upon sources and precise principles of *ijtih¡d*, I have committed myself to the scholarly deduction of the fundamentals of this theory, as well as its major and central ideas, by relying upon the authoritative texts or the deductive opinions that are familiar in the milieus of Sh¢`ite scholars, in order that my ascription of such ideas and notions to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their group would be as accurate as possible. Moreover,

1- In Islamic terminology, the word *ijtih¡d* is a polysemous term. Lexically, it means the exertion of efforts in the attainment of a matter. In the initial emergence of *ijtih¡d*, it took the meaning of dependence upon personal views and issuance of personal judgments in religious issues even if this would violate the sources of the Islamic laws since such judgment would agree with private or public interests. In the Sunni jurisprudence, *ijtih¡d* signifies the independent or original interpretation of problems not precisely covered by the Holy Qur'¡n, the Holy Sunnah, and the other sources of Islamic law from the viewpoint of Sunni scholars, such as analogy (*Qiy¡s*), consensus (*Ijm¡`*), etc. In Sh¢`ite jurisprudence, *ijtih¡d* signifies the exertion of all possible efforts in the deduction of the religious laws from their original sources. To sum up, the concept of *ijtih¡d* in the Sunni doctrine is different from the Sh¢`ite concept. While it stands for a personal conclusion in Sunni doctrine, it has its definite principles and fundamentals that cannot be contravened and are based upon divine texts in the Sh¢`ite doctrine. The latter is the denotation that is meant from the word *ijtih¡d* in this book. [*translator*]

I have referred to examples and texts supporting this *ijtih¡d*.

As for the details, I have exerted all possible efforts in relying upon authenticated texts and common texts that can be trusted as authentic, except in some secondary points that do not affect the original sense of the theory; rather, they clarify and explain it. In view of this, it becomes possible to justify the reference to some reported texts of similar purport or indicate the pluralism or acceptability of such texts.

Originally, I rested upon the general jurisprudential 'Rule of Condescendence in Evidence on Religious Traditions'[1] in my reference to the details of the recommended acts, especially rituals and devotional acts. This is because such details would clarify the theory and its dimensions and prove my painstaking attempts to mention the authenticity and authoritativeness of the traditions when it is appropriate to confirm an idea.

At the same time, I have tried to exclude peculiar ideas that are not found in authoritative sources.

As a final point, I would like to emphasize that this book represents an initial attempt. Such iniatial attempts are often associated with errors, flaws, and defects. I therefore beseech Almighty Allah to forgive me for such flaws, to accept my humble work, and to grant success to complete this project. I also beseech Him to make this work admitted and approved by Him, His Holy Prophet (¥), the

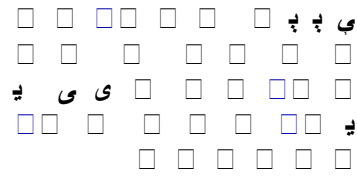
1- The 'Rule of Condescendence in Evidence on Religious Traditions' (*al-tas¡mu¦ f¢ addilat al-sunan*) is a jurisprudential principle entailing inclusion of a certain state within a common ruling even if this state has not been proven to belong to it. [*translator*]

Immaculate Imams (‘a), and especially our master and leader, the Patron of the Age, Imam al-Mahd¢—may Allah expedite his advent.

I also hope that readers and researchers would kindly highlight flaws and inform me about them through their valuable communications so that they may be rectified.

Finally, Almighty Allah is the Source of all success, guidance, and acceptance.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon Mu¦ammad and upon his Household—the immaculate and infallible.



Our Lord: Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord: Do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us. Our Lord: Do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us, grant us protection, and have mercy on us. You are our Patron; so, help us against the unbelieving people. (2/286)

Mu¦ammad B¡qir al-°ak¢m
Dhu’l-Qa`dah 14, AH 1417.

Book One:
Goals And
Characteristics

Chapter One: Goals of the Virtuous Community

Chapter Two: Characteristics of the Virtuous Community

PREAMBLE

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) worked in the Muslim community within two major frameworks and in two interlaced spheres:

First: They worked amidst the wide-ranging domain of Muslims and interacted with the community in general and in its broad extremities. Within this scope, the adherents and believers in the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were not distinguishable from the other individuals of the Muslim community except by the amount of their doctrinal, spiritual, and emotional attachment to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). This was demonstrated by their doctrinal and political loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as well as moral commitment and obedience to their commands and instructions.

Second: They worked privately with special Muslim individuals who interacted with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) at a higher level and believed in the Ahl al-Bayt’s special role in Islamic ideology based on the principle of Imamate (i.e. leadership of the Muslim community) and the divinely commissioned successorship of the Holy Prophet (¥).

It is important to note that those involved in the second circle became a virtuous community of special identity and a righteous entity enjoying its own features and known in the Muslim milieus as ‘*the Sh¢`ah* (adherents) *of the Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a)’. They were not differentiated from the Muslims of the first wider circle solely due to their inclination towards the movement of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Rather, the

individuals of this special circle were promoted on account of the responsibilities and instructions directly placed upon them by the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), whose purpose beyond such promotion was to engender this community and entity.

To sum up, this entity, the Sh¢`ah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), did not exist arbitrarily. Such faithful individuals were the outcome of a purposeful and focused plan designed by the Holy Imams (‘a) to build this virtuous community.

The Holy Imams (‘a) had realized that their general goals, one of which was to defend the entity of Islam and to safeguard the existence of the Muslim nation, would not be achieved if they directed their efforts to the totality of Muslims represented by the first circle. The achievement of this goal, along with its various aspects, depended upon the features of perpetual cognizance, continuous emotional momentum, and presence of a leader who could undertake the mission of enlightenment.

We thus observe that the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), from the beginning, in addition to undertaking their general responsibilities entrusted to them by Almighty Allah, used to pay special attention to activity within the private circle. For instance, the Holy Prophet (¥) took an extraordinary interest in this aspect; he, therefore, founded the practice of following Imam `Al¢ (namely, *tashayyu`*) and promoted it as an ideological and political line that came into existence during his lifetime and under his supervision. Not stopping here, the Holy Prophet (¥) directed an elite group of his companions towards this line, causing them to be the virtuous seed of Sh¢`ism.[1] In addition, Imam `Al¢ (‘a)

1- The reader is advised to refer to my book entitled ‘*al-Sh¢`ah wa'l-Tashayyu*`’ for evidence on this claim and more details about this ⇨

himself undertook this mission when he built a virtuous community in the holy city of al-Mad¢nah. Thereafter, he expanded this group in al-K£fah through the agency of °udhayfah ibn al-Yam¡n, Salm¡n al-F¡ris¢ (the Persian), and `Amm¡r ibn Y¡sir, and in Lebanon through the agency of Ab£-Dharr al-Ghif¡r¢, and in the Yemen during the period that he spent there as governor. The same thing can be said about other cities, such as Egypt and al-Ba¥rah.

More light will be shed on this topic later in this book when we present the features of the process of building a virtuous community as led by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

topic.

Chapter One:
Goals Of Building
The Virtuous Community

The fundamental objectives of building a virtuous community are generally the same previously mentioned objectives of the Holy Imams (‘a). These objectives can be summarized in the following points:

(1) Establish Proof (of Almighty Allah) for the people

(2) Lead the Islamic experiment in theory and practice

(3) Establish ideological and religious authority over Muslims

(4) Defend Islam and its doctrines

(5) Guard the political existence of Islam by preserving its Islamic government, society and every individual entity

(6) Play the role of excellent exemplars

In the upcoming details regarding building a virtuous community many features of these goals will manifest themselves. However, we have to refer to the following points in order to make the manifestation of these features more feasible:

CONTRIBUTION TO THE ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP (ASSUMING THE ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT)

Without doubt, one of the major objectives of the existence of the Holy Imams (‘a) and their presentation of a thesis within the framework of the divine message of Islam is to lead the Islamic mission and take it to a high level of perfection. The Divine planning for the Final Message necessitated the attainment of a level of perfection compatible with its wide-ranging scope during which rule would be assumed by the Twelve Imams (‘a)—a period of about three centuries, at least, if we take into consideration the lowest estimate of the natural age of each of the Holy Imams (‘a).

It is also possible to presume that such perfection would cover all aspects of life, including mental, scientific, ethical, governmental, relational, organizational, and financial aspects (economic growth, social security and liability), along with military forces and promulgation of Islam and Islamic culture all over the world. Features would also cover other aspects of human life such that they would, practically and in actuality, be examples of Almighty Allah’s Word in the Holy Qur’¡n:

ﻧ ﻩ ﻫ ﻬ ﻭ ﻮ ﻯ ﻰ ﻱ ﻲ ﻳ ﻴ ﺀ ﺁ ﺂ ﺃ ﺄ ﺅ ﺆ ﺇ ﺈ ﺉ ﺊ ﺍ ﺎ ﺏ ﺐ ﺑ ﺒ ﺓ ﺔ ﺕ ﺖ ﺗ ﺘ ﺙ ﺚ ﺛ ﺜ ﺝ ﺞ ﺟ ﺠ ﺡ ﺢ ﺣ ﺤ ﺥ ﺦ ﺧ ﺨ ﺩ ﺪ ﺫ ﺬ ﺭ ﺮ ﺯ ﺰ ﺱ ﺲ ﺳ ﺴ ﺵ ﺶ ﺷ ﺸ ﺹ ﺺ ﺻ ﺼ ﺽ ﺾ ﺿ ﻀ ﻁ ﻂ ﻃ ﻄ ﻅ ﻆ ﻇ ﻈ ﻉ ﻊ ﻋ ﻌ ﻍ ﻎ ﻏ ﻐ ﻑ ﻒ ﻓ ﻔ ﻕ ﻖ ﻗ ﻘ

He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse. (9:33)

Unfortunately, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were driven away from playing this vital role due to the deviation of people from the right path, improper choices, misjudgments, and dependence upon personal interests in all fields, especially politics. As a result, Muslims in particular and all human beings in general have had to experience restricted progress, frustration, and adverse conditions. The one and only party responsible for such consequences is man alone. Human beings are also the parties responsible for all other disappointments and obstacles throughout the history of humanity, beginning the moment Almighty Allah created Adam and chose for him a wife to live with him in Paradise up to the missions of the prophets (‘a), when they failed to respond to the divine missions. Referring to this fact, the Holy Qur’¡n declares:

ﭺ ﭻ ﭼ ﭽ ﭾ ﭿ ﮀ ﮁ ﮂ ﮃ
ﮄ ﮅ ﮆ ﮇ ﮈ ﮉ ﮊ ﮋ ﮌ ﮍ
ﮎ ﮏ ﮐ ﮑ ﮒ ﮓ ﮔ ﮕ ﮖ ﮗ
ﮘ ﮙ ﮚ ﮛ ﮜ ﮝ ﮞ ﮟ ﮠ ﮡ
ﮢ ﮣ ﮤ ﮥ ﮦ ﮧ ﮨ ﮩ ﮪ ﮫ
ﮬ ﮭ ﮮ ﮯ ﮰ ﮱ

All people were a single nation; so, Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners and revealed with them the Book with the truth that it might judge between people in that in which they differed. But those to whom the Scripture was given, after clear arguments had come to them, differed among themselves. Therefore, Allah has guided by His will those who believe the truth about which they differed. Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path. (2/213)

The Holy Imams (‘a), however, attempted to return the

situation to its proper form. Hence, after being driven away from their mission immediately after the demise of the Holy Prophet (¥), they planned to reassume the mission of guiding to Islam. Building a virtuous community was one of their plans, because it would play a significant role in their contribution to the Islamic leadership.

This fact can be obviously noticed through a survey of the period in which the first three Imams—namely Imam `Al¢, Imam °asan, and Imam °usayn (‘a)[1]—lived. These Imams attempted to assume the leadership of the Muslim community through their political discourses with the Muslim community.

In point of fact, Imam `Al¢ (‘a) did hold the leadership, but this did not last for a long period during Imam °asan’s lifetime. After that, Muslims hoped that the leadership would return to the status quo when Imam °usayn (‘a) held it; therefore, they asked him to undertake the mission that resulted in the horrible tragedy of Karbal¡.

There is no doubt that Imam `Al¢ (‘a) raised and educated an elite group of people and built up their spiritual and organizational posture so firmly that they fought under his pennon and offered great sacrifices for the sake of Islam to substantiate the ideals and values to which the Imam (‘a) had called.

1- Undoubtedly, Imam al-°usayn (‘a) knew that he would not be able to maintain political leadership of the Muslim nation; nevertheless, his declared goal and political speeches and activities were all devoted to retaining political leadership. This was, in fact, required as his religious and humanitarian duty vis-à-vis the circumstances, although the actual purpose behind Imam °usayn's movement was to achieve other matters, which we will mention in a later chapter dedicated to discussing the history and attitudes of the Holy Imams (‘a).

Similarly, Imam °asan (‘a) was able to preserve the same group by specifying their safety as one of the conditions of his peace truce with Mu‘¡wiyah.

As a result, this elite group was able to play a pioneering role during the age of Imam °usayn (‘a) when they were able to break through the stagnant states of acquiescence to the Umayyad regime under whose shadows the Muslim nation then lived. They were also able to promulgate the objective of the movement of Imam °usayn (‘a) whose slogan was to overthrow the Umayyad ruling regime and prepare a platform on which his uprising could achieve its widest range in the milieu of the Muslim nation, leaving an endless influence on the course of Muslim history. In fact, most of these goals, including the eventual collapse of the Umayyad dynasty, were achieved.

As regards the period of the first three Imams (‘a), we can maintain that the leading and most important objective of building a virtuous community during that period was to contribute to the process of guiding others to Islam—an objective corresponding to the activities of the Holy Imams (‘a) in the field of preserving the Muslim nation. The first procedure in this process was installing a genuinely Islamic government both externally, which was actually achieved by Imam `Al¢ and Imam °asan (‘a), though for a short period, and theoretically. Working towards installing an Islamic government theoretically, the Holy Imams (‘a) were able to create in the Muslim nation a trend demanding the installation of such a genuinely Islamic government and forming a pressure group that could correct the course of the Muslim governments throughout history.

The Role of the Elite during the Reign of the First Three Caliphs

As has been previously discussed, this specially chosen

group, which represented the virtuous community built by the Holy Imams (‘a) and demanded that the political and religious leadership be entrusted to Imam `Al¢ (‘a), played a considerable role in guiding the Muslim public during the reign of the second Caliph, `Umar ibn al-Kha§§¡b. However, `Umar ibn al-Kha§§¡b determined that the choice of the leadership following himself would be restricted to six persons through the so-called principle of *sh£r¡* (consultation) and that the final decision would be at the discretion of `Abd al-Ra¦m¡n ibn `Awf in the case that these six persons disputed the nomination of one among two. This was in fact an organized attempt to absorb the pressure of the demands of the virtuous community.

Despite this attempt, pressure by the masses forced `Abd al-Ra¦m¡n ibn `Awf to select Imam `Al¢ (‘a) and call upon him to hold the leadership of the Muslim nation. However, `Abd al-Ra¦m¡n specified a condition, knowing that Imam ‘Al¢ (‘a) would certainly reject it, that Imam ‘Al¢ (‘a) must conform to the conduct of the two previous caliphs in addition to the Holy Qur’¡n and Sunnah.[1]

The activity of this pressure group became more obvious when the sedition of `Uthm¡n’s assassination took place. Immediately, the masses hurried to swear allegiance to Imam `Al¢ (‘a) in an unprecedented way. This fact is one of the distinctive features of Imam `Al¢’s leadership for which he excelled all other caliphs who preceded and

1- In specifying this condition, `Abd al-Ra¦m¡n ibn `Awf established a new principle in the Muslim community by which the conduct of Ab£-Bakr and `Umar were raised to a level of sacredness similar to that of the Holy Prophet (¥). Of course, Imam ‘Al¢ (‘a) would never accept such a stipulation. Neither the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) nor the elite, who believed in the divinely commissioned leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), accepted the condition.

followed him. The allegiance to Ab£-Bakr, on the other hand, was made at a limited meeting held in the court of Ban£-S¡`idah (*saq¢fah*) where attending Muslims disagreed about the issue and many distinguished Muslim personalities were absent.

As for `Umar ibn al-Kha§§¡b, he was given the oath of fealty because Ab£-Bakr nominated him as the next caliph and because of the Muslims' silence regarding this nomination after Ab£-Bakr rejected the objections of some Muslim personalities, such as ±al¦ah.

`Uthm¡n ibn `Aff¡n was declared the caliph of Muslims as a result of the aforementioned restricted so-called *sh£r¡*.[1]

As for the rulers who came after Imam `Al¢ (‘a), all of them held the authority of the Muslim nation through nomination of the previous caliphs, inheritance, power, and suppression of the masses. It is an undeniable fact that the true role of *sh£r¡* was totally erased from political life after the demise of the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

The Role of the Elite during Imam ‘Alī’s Reign

The elite believers played a distinct role during the conflicts that Imam `Al¢ (‘a) had to encounter against his rivals `ª'ishah, ±al¦ah, Zubayr, and the Umayyads, headed by Mu`¡wiyah. In these conflicts, Imam `Al¢ (‘a) demonstrated the importance of ‘maintaining Islamic principles and values’ against the notion of ‘temporary benefits and tangible gains’ adopted by the Imam’s rivals. Unquestionably, Imam `Al¢ (‘a)–due to the emotional and historical circumstances of that period–could not have

1- *Ma`¡lim al-Madrasatayn*, 1:477-484, as quoted from Ibn Abi'l-°ad¢d's *Shar¦ Nahj al-Bal¡ghah* 4:8-9.

continued in this conflict nor achieved relative success without the existence of an elite group such as the one that he had built in the milieu of the Muslim nation.

Examples of Notable Men

Imam `Al¢'s efforts in building a virtuous community resulted in role models like:

(1) M¡lik al-Ashtar
(2) H¡shim al-Mirq¡l
(3) Mu¦ammad ibn Ab¢-Bakr
(4) Qays ibn Sa`d ibn `Ab¡dah
(5) °ijr ibn `Ad¢
(6) ¯a`¥a`ah ibn ¯aw¦¡n
(7) Zayd ibn ¯aw¦¡n
(8) Uways al-Qiran¢
(9) Sulaym¡n ibn ¯urad al-Khuz¡`¢
(10) Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'al¢
(11) `Abdull¡h ibn ±al¦ah
(12) `Abdull¡h ibn Ja`far
(13) Khabb¡b ibn al-Aratt
(14) `Abdull¡h ibn Khabb¡b ibn al-Aratt
(15) `Ad¢ ibn °¡tam al-±¡'¢
(16) `Aq¢l ibn Ab¢-±¡lib
(17) `Amr ibn al-°amq al-Khuz¡`¢
(18) Qanbar, the manumitted slave of Imam `Al¢
(19) Mu¦ammad ibn Ab¢-°udhayfah
(20) Khuzaymah ibn Th¡bit al-An¥¡r¢ (*dhu'l-shah¡datayn*)
(21) Al-A¥bagh ibn Nub¡tah
(22) Maytham al-Tamm¡r

(23) Kumayl ibn Ziy¡d

(24) Al-°¡rith al-Hamd¡n¢

(25) Rash¢d al-Hajar¢, an

(26) `Abdull¡h ibn `Abb¡s

In addition to these personalities and many others, we can refer in this regard to some companions of the Holy Prophet (¥) (i.e. *¥a¦¡bah*) such as:

(1) `Amm¡r ibn Y¡sir

(2) Ibn al-Tayh¡n

(3) `Uthm¡n ibn °unayf

(4) Sahl ibn °unayf

(5) J¡bir ibn `Abdull¡h al-An¥¡r¢

The deaths of these people grieved Imam `Al¢ (‘a), causing him to weep whenever he thought about the tremendous loss that had been left in the progressive movement of Islam. The loss was great because the Imam had met with each of these personalities separately and entrusted them with his secrets.

The effective role of this elite group lasted until the time of Imam °usayn (‘a) when the remaining members of the group sacrificed themselves for the sake of his movement, which was an unmistakable effort to regain the leadership of the Islamic nation.[1]

1- We can understand the role of the virtuous community in assuming the leadership of the Muslim nation at large through comprehension of the Ahl al-Bayt’s views on this issue.

PRESERVING THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

According to the Holy Imams (‘a), the mission of preserving the Muslim community is the second objective of building a virtuous entity.

In fact, this virtuous entity was able to play a vital role in the preservation of the Muslim community in the presence of the Holy Imams (‘a) and also after the Major Occultation of Imam al-Mahd¢—may Allah hasten his Advent.

Building a virtuous community was not solely aimed at increasing the number of supporters and truly guided individuals whose aid was required in the political activities undertaken by the Holy Imams (‘a). There were also other deeper aims connected to the general goals of the Holy Imams (‘a) at all levels. These profound goals could only be undertaken by an organized and united virtuous community.

The following points and facts will further clarify the goals and their significance:

Defending the Muslim Society

The virtuous, elite group is required to preserve the power and consistency of the Muslim society by means of defending it against internal and external enemies. In this domain, the followers (Sh¢`ah) and adherents of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) played significant roles in driving back foreign invasions against the Muslim world in the late period of the `Abb¡sid dynasty. The °amd¡nite dynasty in Syria (who were Sh¢`ah) fought the Crusades, and the Idr¢site dynasty in northern Africa (who were also Sh¢`ah) fought against the enemies of Islam. Similarly, the Sh¢`ah resisted the Mongol invasion in the east of the Muslim homeland, withstanding its aggressive momentum. They also

participated in the eradication of the mutiny of the insurgents in the districts of Tabaristan, and the mutinies of the Turks and the Daylam in the districts of the Caspian Sea as well as other districts.

Under the guidance of the Holy Imams (‘a), Sh¢`ite personalities played diverse roles in defending Islam. They confronted the movements of atheism and agnosticism and the tendencies of moral corruption that spread to major Muslim cities, such as al-Mad¢nah, Makkah, al-K£fah, al-Ba¥rah, Syria, Baghdad, and other Muslim cities. This fact can be easily proven through the debates, discussions, and schools that were established by the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as well as through the high moral standards they practiced and their resistance against various types of corruption, deviation, and bias.[1]

Presenting a Righteous Example

In order to build a virtuous community, it was necessary to introduce an example of righteousness in Muslim society, especially in an age when personal interests were preponderant over common benefits and interests of Islam and the Muslim nation. It was easy for the Umayyad regime to overpower the people’s consciences and keep them quiet with pay-offs, exploit the religion for financial gain, and forge lies against the Holy Prophet (¥) in order to justify the various flagrant acts of misconduct the ruling elite of the regime used to commit.

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) paid great attention to this matter. Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) instructed his adherents to act as exceptional examples in their behavior towards Muslims to

1- I will devote a book to discussing these details in the future.

preserve the Muslim society and guide the people to the true path.

In this respect, Shaykh al-Kulayn¢ has reported through an authentic chain of authority (*sanad*) that ¯afw¡n ibn Ya¦y¡ reported on the authority of Ab£-Us¡mah Zayd al-Sha¦¦¡m that Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) said to him:

إِقْرَأْ عَلَى مَنْ تَرَى أَنَّهُ يُطِيعُنِي مِنْهُمْ وَيَأْخُذُ بِقَوْلِي السَّلاَمَ، وَأُوصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَالْوَرَعَ فِي دِينِكُمْ، وَالاجْتِهَادَ للهِ، وَصِدْقَ الْحَدِيثِ، وَأَدَاءَ الأَمَانَةِ، وَطُولَ السُّجُودِ، وَحُسْنَ الْجِوَارِ. فَبِهَذَا جَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ؛ كَانَ يَأْمُرُ بِأَدَاءِ الْخَيْطِ وَالْمَخِيطِ. صِلُوا عَشَائِرَكُمْ، وَاشْهَدُوا جَنَائِزَهُمْ، وَعُودُوا مَرْضَاهُمْ، وَأَدُّوا

Say to all those you see following my orders: Peace be upon you. I advise you to fear Almighty Allah, act piously with regard to the affairs of your religion, work painstakingly for the sake of Almighty Allah, be honest in speech, safeguard property and securities entrusted to you, prostrate yourselves before Almighty Allah for considerable periods and observe good-neighborliness. Verily, these are the traits with which Prophet Mu¦ammad (¥) came. You must give back to their owners that with which you have been entrusted whether the owners are righteous or depraved. The Messenger of Allah (¥) used to order his followers to return everything even if only a thread and a needle. Build good relationships with your clans, attend their funeral processions, visit the sick among them, and carry out your duties towards them. Verily, if one of you shows piety in his religious affairs, speaks nothing but the truth, and behaves politely towards others, he will be referred to as belonging to Ja`far and they will say that this is the way Ja`far educates his followers. This will please me and

حُقُوقَهُمْ؛ فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْكُمْ إِذَا وَرِعَ فِي دِينِهِ وَصَدَقَ الْحَدِيثَ وَأَدَّى الأَمَانَةَ وَحَسَّنَ خُلُقَهُ مَعَ النَّاسِ قِيلَ هَذَا جَعْفَرِيٌّ، فَيَسُرُّنِي ذَلِكَ وَيَدْخُلُ عَلَيَّ مِنْهُ السُّرُورَ، وَقِيلَ هَذَا أَدَبُ جَعْفَرٍ. وَاللهِ لَحَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي القَبِيلَةِ مِنْ شِيعَةِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ فَيَكُونُ زَيْنَهَا، آدَاهُمْ لِلأَمَانَةِ، وَأَقْضَاهُمْ لِلْحُقُوقِ، وَأَصْدَقَهُمْ لِلْحَدِيثِ، إِلَيْهِ وَصَايَاهُمْ وَوَدَائِعُهُمْ، تُسْأَلُ الْعَشِيرَةُ عَنْهُ فَتَقُولُ: مَنْ

fill me with delight. If anyone does the opposite, it is I who will be defamed and offended, since the people will then say that Ja`far has trained his followers in this manner. I swear by Allah that my father (‘a) told me that a (true) Sh¢`ite in a clan would be the best of its individuals, the most trustworthy, the most observant of the rights of others, and the most honest. The other individuals of that clan would always consign their wills and trusts to him. When asked about him, they would answer that he was unmatched among them, since he was the most trustworthy and the most honest.[1]

1- Al-°urr al-`Amil¢, *Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah* 8:398 H. 2.

مِـثْـلُ فُـلانٍ؟ إِنَّـــهُ
آدَ انَـا لِـلأَمَـانَـــةِ
وَ أَصْـــــــــــدَقُـنَـا
لِـلْـحَدِيـثِ.

The last paragraph of this discourse is clear-cut proof of the expected role of the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as testified by Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) who reports it from his father, Imam al-B¡qir (‘a).[1]

Islamic Unity

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) played a remarkable role in the creation of an atmosphere of harmony and unity between their partisans and the followers of other Islamic sects. They practiced *taqiyyah*[2] with these parties in order to maintain harmony with them, strengthen the spirit of peaceful coexistence, and establish coherence among the various Muslim groups.

It is true that *taqiyyah* provided the adherents of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) a means of protection from the persecution practiced against them by the antagonistic rulers, but this was not the only goal of *taqiyyah* as endorsed by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). In fact, *taqiyyah* was ordained mainly for the achievement of unity and harmony in the Muslim community. Therefore, we can find the Holy Imams (‘a) urging their followers to create a spirit of mutual solidarity, joint liability, and fulfillment of covenants and promises

1- More light will be shed on this role in the coming discussion of the moral aspect of the social relationships of the virtuous community.

2- *Taqiyyah* (self-protection or pious dissimulation) is the practice of concealing one’s beliefs and foregoing ordinary religious duties when under threat of death or injury to oneself or one’s fellow Muslims or when intended for achieving a superior purpose.

with other constituents of the Muslim community. Likewise, they encouraged their followers to adhere to friendliness and good-neighborliness, participate in social ceremonies, visit public places, and call upon the sick. The Holy Imams (‘a) asserted that it was impossible to abandon the populace or survive in isolation.

Abiding by these instructions, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt practiced the recommendations whether they were powerful or weak and rejected by the ruling authorities. History has not recorded any single event exposing a Sh¢`ah practice of repression or elimination against the followers of other Muslim sects even when power was in their hands; rather, they always abided by the course of self-defense when encountering vehement attacks. Following this course, they would cling to patience, silence, and forbearance of various types of harm and prejudice to their inherent natural rights. In the same manner, the Sh¢`ah had never resorted to terrorism, violence, and methods of assassination, kidnapping, taking hostages, or killing people by means of thirst or starvation. In fact, it is the Sh¢`ah who had to encounter such inhumane practices that were used against even the innocent and enfeebled, like women, children, and elderly men.

A more detailed discussion of *taqiyyah* will follow in the coming chapter on the security system of the virtuous community. However, let us cite the following text in which Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) distinguishes one of the reasons for the legislation on *taqiyyah*:

In *U¥£l al-K¡f¢*, Shaykh al-Kulayn¢ has reported through an authenticated chain of authority that Mur¡zim reported Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) as having said:

عَلَـيْكُمْ بِـالـصَّلاَةِ فِـي I advise you to offer prayers in the mosques (of the non-Sh¢`ah

Muslims) and show good-neighborliness to people. Testify for the rightful parties and attend their funeral ceremonies. Verily, you can never abandon others. No one can live without others at any time during their lifetimes, since people have an indispensable need for each other.[1]

الْمَسَاجِدِ وَحُسْنِ الْجِوَارِ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِقَامَةِ الشَّهَادَةِ وَحُضُورِ الْجَنَائِزِ. إِنَّهُ لاَ بُدَّ لَكُمْ مِنَ النَّاسِ. إِنَّ أَحَداً لاَ يَسْتَغْنِي عَنِ النَّاسِ فِي حَيَاتِهِ، وَالنَّاسُ لاَ بُدَّ لِبَعْضِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ.

Fundamentalism and High Moral Standards

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) established the trend of complying with the spirit of fundamentalism and high moral standards.

They infused the spirit of supporting the rightful party and observing the basic religious laws among the Sh¢`ah and followers of their school. Having become a distinctive feature of the Sh¢`ah, compliance with these principles made the Sh¢`ah stand out from the opposition throughout history, although they lost numerous material benefits and were exposed to persecution as a result. However, this spirit and course has been a major factor that elucidated the values and ideals of the Muslim community through the lifestyles of the virtuous individuals who held fast to the truth, forsook worldly pleasures, and aspired to the achievement of the supreme ideals and goals.

Many opportunities presented themselves before the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to sink, along with the

1- Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah: 8:399, ch.1, H.5.

general trend, towards corruption and achieve limited and transient gains, such as during the early period of `Abb¡sid rule. The Holy Imams (‘a) did not begin an armed struggle against the `Abb¡sid regime in its first days because the `Abb¡sids were allies of the Sh¢`ah in opposing the Umayyad regime and enjoyed a good relationship with the Sh¢`ah. However, the `Abb¡sid regime later expected the Sh¢`ah to support them in their corrupt use of power and spurn the fundamentals of Islam, which the Sh¢`ah rejected outright.

The Sh¢`ah were subsequently offered other seductive opportunities concerning their varying tentative roles during the Mongol invasion and European campaigns against Islamic countries like Iraq, Lebanon, some countries of the Persian Gulf, the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan, Iran, etc. During these periods, the Sh¢`ah had many opportunities to cooperate with new political developments that brought about Western dominance over the Islamic world. Nevertheless, in spite of persecution, they did not take advantage of these situations to gain political and social control in spite of the fact that others did take advantage of such situations.

The Sh¢`ah chose to resist foreign invasions and persist in complying with their fundamentals. They suffered deprivation and persecution because of this fundamentalism even though they formed an overwhelming majority in some of the new districts of the Islamic world. On account of their supreme spirit of fundamentalism, which had already been their distinctive feature, the Sh¢`ah rejected an opportunistic and deviant way.[1]

1- More light will be shed on this significant role of the Sh¢`ah in the seventh book of this series; namely, *The Virtuous Community* ⇨

These sensitive situations have greatly influenced the steadfastness of the Muslim community against invading trends and in their dedication to the maintenance of the community, their persistence in protesting against corruption and oppression, and soaring above all worldly seductions.

Humanity and Internationality

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) worked towards extinguishing all racial, sectarian, and provincial prejudice—which was common among the Arab people and deeply rooted during the pre-Islamic era—among Muslims in general and the Arab people in particular. Due to the expansive Islamic conquests and intermixture between Arabs and non-Arabs, such feelings resurfaced largely during the Umayyad reign and caused conflicts among the Muslims and discrimination between Arab and non-Arab (*maw¡l¢*) Muslims. Unfortunately, this attitude gained royal support from the `Abb¡sid and Ottoman dynasties.

The adherents of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) presented the impartial spirit of fraternity among Muslims through their faith-based behavior. They never stirred up national or racial discrimination since they emulated the behavior of the Holy Imams (‘a), who provided custody to weak subjects who converted to Islam as a result of conquests and suffered racial, national, and social discrimination because they were considered second-class citizens.

As a consequence, the Sh¢`ah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have been accused of belonging to non-Arab origins. This charge has continued up to the present day because the Sh¢`ah have always treated all Muslims with the spirit of fraternity

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Emulating the Ahl al-Bayt(‘a).

and, because of this broad-mindedness, they left sympathetic impressions in the hearts of non-Arab Muslims.

Sacrifice and Readiness for Martyrdom

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) kindled the spirit of self-sacrifice and readiness for martyrdom in the minds of Muslims. In addiiton, they helped the public persist in objecting to injustice and tyranny. Consequently, the virtuous community created by the Holy Imams (‘a) enjoyed a clear-cut role in Muslim history of leading uprisings and liberal and reformative movements against the corrupt conditions of Muslim society. Either directly or indirectly, through the influence they left on the Muslim public, the Sh¢`ah have led many revolutions and uprisings.[1]

This revolutionary trend has always been one of the distinctive features of the Ahl al-Bayt’s adherents in their relationship with the Muslims. This mutual influence has manifested itself more obviously in present times.

One of the most significant features that distinguishes the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) from all others is their ultimate abstention from helping oppressors and unjust rulers except in very limited cases and under certain circumstances.[2]

1- Such practices were carried out according to general standards and under the auspices of the Holy Imams (‘a) regarding true opposition, which will be presented in the coming book on the general policies of the Holy Imams in this respect.

2- In the coming book on the *Security System of the Virtuous Community*, this point will be discussed in detail.

SAFEGUARDING ISLAMIC LAW AGAINST DISTORTION

Safeguarding Islamic law against distortion was one of the most important objectives the Holy Imams (‘a) intended in building a virtuous community. During their lifetimes, the Holy Imams (‘a) worked towards achieving this objective so that Islamic law, after their absence, would not be exposed to distortion and loss because of political circumstances, predominance of personal desires, and other factors causing distortion and loss of beliefs. The function of the virtuous community would be to continue this mission after the Holy Imams (‘a). Islam, being the final Divine Message had to be safeguarded against loss in order to make it possible to observe and develop human interests by total commitment to the factual limits of this message, which needed to be established in all times and ages. Referring to this purpose, the Holy Qur’¡n states:

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ﮇ ﮈ ﮉ ﮊ ﮋ ﮌ ﮍ

(We sent) messengers as givers of good news and warners, so that people should not have any argument against Allah after the coming of messengers. Allah is Mighty, Wise. (4/165)[1]

The following features of the virtuous community as represented by the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) demonstrate the role that they have played in safeguarding Islamic law against distortion:

1- I have discussed the topic of establishing Almighty Allah’s Proof against the arguments raised by His creatures in the book entitled ‘*The Argument* (*al-¦ujjah*)’ within this encyclopedia.

Principle of Resistance

The followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) demonstrated their doctrinal and conceptual compliance with the political principle of resisting and confronting wrongdoers. Unfortunately, this Islamic fundament became susceptible to attempts of eradication and extinction either by persecution and pursuit or by deception and distortion. Many false terms and traditions were forged in the name of the Holy Prophet (¥) in order to justify surrender to unsuitable ruling authorities and yield to their unjust deeds. The Muslim masses acted upon such falsities; however, the virtuous community of the Ahl al-Bayt’s followers maintained the political trend of resisting unjust authorities. They also transferred this trend to the next generation not only as motto and theory but also as an applied course of action in actual political situations.

In addition, because of such a political attitude the Ahl al-Bayt School (‘a) and the virtuous community, which inferred religious laws from their sources (i.e. *ijtih¡d*), were far above yielding to personal desires and adopting situations that might support unjust ruling authorities. Thus, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School has shown independency from the ruling authorities at both practical and theoretical levels. One of their distinctive features is that they have separated the issue of ijtih¡d from the deviating political actions of the ruling authorities.

Ijtihād in the frame of the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) guided the virtuous community to keep the door of *ijtih¡d* wide open yet only within the scope of divine fundaments and criteria. The authentic sources of Islamic legislation are the Holy Qur’¡n and the Holy Sunnah; however, other Muslim sects, for certain reasons, depended upon other sources——such as

analogy (*qiy¡s*), equitable preference (*Isti¦s¡n*),[1] acceptable advantages (*al-Ma¥¡li¦ al-Mursalah*), the opinion of any companion of the Holy Prophet (*Qawl al-¯a¦¡b¢*),[2] and other principles. They closed the door of *ijtih¡d* because of the damages that befell *ijtih¡d* in its capacity of inferring religious laws and applying them on the emerging issues that required religious verdicts. Such inventions caused the Muslim code of law (*shar¢`ah*) to encounter the peril of distortion. In addition, closing the door of *ijtih¡d* left perilous, negative effects on the process of inferring religious laws from their sources and on the competence of the Muslim code of law to deal with the emerging problems facing human society due to major developments in all spheres of life. Once again, owing to difficulties in the milieus of the public, such a procedure has placed Muslim jurisprudents in a state of scholarly poverty and prompted a large number of scholars, throughout the past ages, to aspire to guide their followers after re-opening the door of *ijtih¡d*, especially in the present time.

On the other hand, the virtuous community among the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) possessed a unique trait: the individuals of this community enriched and controlled the process of *ijtih¡d*. Hence, this process has convoyed the developments of the human society without leaving a single gap for distortion or yielding before Western concepts and materialistic civilizations that could influence Islamic law.

1- In Sunni jurisprudence, *isti¦s¡n* is the use of one's own judgment to determine the best solution to a religious problem that cannot be solved by citing sacred texts.

2- According to some Sunni jurisprudential schools, *Qawl al-¯a¦¡b¢* (the opinion of any companion of the Prophet (¥)) is one of the principles and sources upon which these schools depend in the deduction of religious laws from their sources.

This School has gone on proffering new aspects and maintaining genuineness in its sources and authentic reserves. It has thus been able to sustain Muslim law and heritage.

Freedom of Thought

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) endowed the virtuous community with the power of free thought, reflection, analysis and examination of various issues appertaining to philosophy, theology and politics, unaffected by inactive frames and ideological restraints that might be imposed upon them due to political or sectarian reasons. This made the virtuous community capable of criticizing the history of Islam and progressively understanding philosophic and theological issues as well as confronting foreign ideological and philosophic issues invading the Muslim world through the ages.

It is true that other Muslim groups, such as the *Mu`tazilah* and the *Ikhw¡n al-¯af¡*, took important steps in this domain, but all their attempts failed because they were detached from the genuine roots of Muslim ideology and besieged by prevailing sectarian doctrine.

Piety and Decency

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) revived piety, decency, and steadfastness in the human personality and placed them effectively in social practices, causing the virtuous community to play a vital and basic role in social life according to which society would practice applied morality. As a result, the virtuous community never accepted the authority and testimony of indecent people. These two factors, piety and decency, are conditional in the personality of the leaders of collective prayers (*im¡m al-jam¡`ah*), the witnesses of divorce and judicial issues, and

those who hold judiciary positions. Moreover, a reporter of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (¥) and Imams (‘a) must be trustworthy regardless of his political affiliation. Hence, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School might admit the report of a reporter who follows another sect or object to a belief of a Shia depending on one’s trustworthiness. This School rejects the report of any liar or untrustworthy person no matter how much loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) he may bear. In plain words, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School does not accept any Ḥad¢th unless it is reported by a trustworthy person.

This principle performed a considerable role in maintaining and transmitting the traditions; therefore, all reports have been subjected to criticism, assessment, and scrutiny in both their chain of authority (*sanad*) and context (*matn*).

Unlike other Muslim groups that have committed themselves to a set of books considering them to be totally authentic despite the fact that these books contain names of some people notorious for fabrication and deviation, it is rare to find any reference book of °ad¢th being wholly acceptable by the virtuous community.[1]

In addition, there is a large number of traditions that the major reference books of °ad¢th of other Muslim sects (i.e. non-Sh¢`ah) have not mentioned for no reason other than that their reported narrators belonged to a sect other than that of the authors of these books. This shows that political loyalty was the one and only criterion in accepting a tradition.

1- Among the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), there was a trend claiming the authenticity of the contents of certain reference books of °ad¢th. This trend is called *al-ikhb¡riyyah*. Yet, it was discarded after being accepted for a certain period.

Recording and Upholding the Muslim Heritage

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) insisted that the individuals of the virtuous community record, uphold, and check the traditions and reported texts about Muslim heritage. They ensured that the virtuous community maintained a considerable number of traditions on various topics, both religious and worldly. In addition, they also possess a tremendous quantity of traditions on topics related to the exegesis of the Holy Qur’¡n, supplications, instructions, sermons, and history in spite of the crucial circumstances they had to encounter throughout various periods in the history of Islam and the scarcity of potential and opportunities. Thus, the Muslim heritage that is currently in circulation among the descendants of the virtuous community is more comprehensive and extensive than the heritage possessed by all other Muslim groups. This fact has largely contributed to the maintenance of Islamic law and the genuine line of Islam, uncontaminated by personal desires, distortion, and political affiliation.

PRELIMINARY STEPS TOWARDS THE ADVENT

All the divine religions, including Islam, have prophesied the advent of a reformer and savior in the last days of this world and human history that will 'fill the earth with justice and fairness, after having been filled with injustice and partiality.'

This prophesy certifies the Qur'¡nic fact that the earth will be inherited by the virtuous and enfeebled people. In this respect, the Holy Qur'¡n states:

ﭽ ﭾ ﭿ ﮀ ﮁ ﮂ ﮃ ﮄ ﮅ ﮆ ﮇ

And certainly We wrote in the Psalms, which came after the Reminder, "My righteous servants shall inherit the earth". (21:105)

ﮈ ﮉ ﮊ ﮋ ﮌ ﮍ ﮎ ﮏ ﮐ ﮑ ﮒ ﮓ ﮔ ﮕ ﮖ ﮗ ﮘ ﮙ ﮚ ﮛ ﮜ ﮝ ﮞ ﮟ ﮠ ﮡ ﮢ ﮣ ﮤ ﮥ ﮦ ﮧ ﮨ ﮩ ﮪ ﮫ ﮬ ﮭ ﮮ ﮯ ﮰ ﮱ ﯓ ﯔ ﯕ ﯖ ﯗ ﯘ ﯙ ﯚ ﯛ ﯜ ﯝ ﯞ ﯟ ﯠ ﯡ ﯢ ﯣ ﯤ ﯥ ﯦ ﯧ ﯨ ﯩ

Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever disbelieves after this are the transgressors (24:55).

The idea of the advent of a reformer before the end of the

world also corresponds with the fact mentioned by the Holy Qur'¡n that right will always eventually overcome wrong throughout the history of humankind. The method of divine custody and intervention through the sending of prophets and messengers and revealing of Divine Books points to the fact that the movement of history is integrative in the sense that its parts complete each other and, in the end, must achieve the ideal society that has been predicted by prophets and virtuous personalities throughout history.

The final divine message (i.e. Islam) has come to achieve human perfection at a level of cognizance and perception. It has also expressed theoretical perfection intending to systemize human life as well as perfect the progress of various social relationships. However, this perfection has not been fully achieved at levels of application, practice, representation, and practical compliance. This is so because such a level of perfection requires a long period of sufferance, dedication, experiment, analysis and examination.

This necessitates the role of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and the virtuous community who undertake the mission of paving the way to the stage of history of the advent of the savior and reformer of humanity.

More than anyone else, the Holy Imams (‘a) used to present the concept of the Advent of Imam al-Mahd¢—may Allah hasten his relief–as the awaited leader who would save humanity from wrong, persecution, and corruption. The presentation of Imam al-Mahd¢'s expected advent attained such a high level that the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) believed that the Holy Imam of their age would be the Awaited Mahd¢.

When they instituted the virtuous community, the Holy Imams (‘a) ensured that this community would play the role

of paving the way for the advent of the awaited Imam during the ages of his occultation not only at the levels of ideology and belief but also at practical levels. This is obvious from the following points:

The Advent is a Vital Concept

The Holy Imams (‘a) activated the concept of the advent of the Awaited Imam in the milieu of the virtuous community actually connecting them with it and creating the feeling of expectation of the advent[1] by making expectation a lively slogan which was raised in the cultural sphere and the political cognizance.

Although all Muslims believe in this concept, it is noticeable that the virtuous community has had an advantage over other Muslims in adopting and perceiving this concept as well as in their compliance with the details of its features. In the view of the virtuous community, the anticipation of the Awaited Imam is not only anticipation of a futuristic state to which all human beings aspire. The Imam is also an existent person who lives with each Muslim, feels the pains of humanity, and suffers the problems of society. Like all other faithful believers, the Awaited Imam (‘a) is in expectation of the Promised Day on which he shall reappear. In other words, he is imperceptible to us but witnesses all that takes place on earth.

1- The concept of expecting the advent of the Awaited Imam was significantly stressed by the Holy Prophet (¥) as has been reported by Muslims in general. Nevertheless, practical and sentimental emphasis on this concept is one of the distinctive features of the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

Responsibility and Will to Change

The process of paving the way for the advent of the Awaited Imam put into effect by the virtuous community is not just a hypothetical idea or doctrinal duty, as is believed by some Muslims and people of other religions. Moreover, it is not just a psychological and spiritual state, although each of these aspects plays a considerable role in the process of paving the way for the advent.

Most importantly, this process is a practical political movement that exists in the Muslim nation and is present as a feeling of responsibility towards all the events that take place within the nation. This feeling generates a strong willpower to work towards achieving this goal and, at the same time, prevent the nation from surrendering to tyrannical rulers or cultural and educational pressures. This very distinctive feature has singled out the virtuous community throughout the history of Islam.

Return to Genuine Islam

Another feature of the virtuous community is that its individuals actively promote the advent of the Awaited Imam and support it against the material and non-religious cultures that are holding sway over the Western world. This will hold true in the future, as is confirmed by traditions of the Holy Infallibles (‘a).

As far as the present is concerned, the role of the virtuous community in introducing Islam to the social, political, and cultural spheres of other societies can be clearly observed in spite of the fact that there have been many attempts to eradicate Islam or to reduce its importance from life,

especially in present times.[1]

By strengthening this idea in the minds of people, we believe that, we can win the support of the Holy Imams (‘a) in achieving the goals of their existence and maintaining and perpetuating their vital roles in Muslim society through the virtuous community, especially after the occultation of the Awaited Imam—may Allah hasten his reappearance.

In view of the above, it was necessary to create such a virtuous community. Therefore, its creation was not just an issue of guiding people to the right path and establishing the final proof against them, although this purpose did influence the formation of this community whose members believed in the divinely commissioned leadership of the Twelve Imams (‘a) and their sacred standing in the Muslim nation.

The text of the following tradition, which is reported by Shaykh al-Kulayn¢ from Imam al-Jaw¡d (‘a) on the authority of his forefathers on the authority of the Holy Prophet (¥), may shed light on the nature of the purpose behind building this virtuous community:

إنَّ َالله خَلَقَ ا لإسْــلاَمَ
فَـجَعَلَ لَـــهُ عَرَصَــةً ،
وَجَعَلَ لَـــهُ نُـــو راً ،
وَجَعَلَ لَـــهُ حِصْــنـاً ،

Verily, Almighty Allah has created Islam and made for it a courtyard, a light, a fortress, and a supporter. The courtyard of Islam is the Qur’in; its light, its wisdom, its fortress, a kind act; and its supporters, I, my Household and our adherents

1- In the fifth book of this series when the roles of each of the Holy Imams (‘a) will be discussed in detail, another discourse about the concept of the Awaited Imam in its cultural aspect will be presented.

(Sh¢`ah). You should thus bear love for my Household, their adherents, and their supporters. When I was ascending to the Lowest Sky where Archangel Gabriel introduced me to the inhabitants of the skies, Almighty Allah ordered the angels to maintain love for me, my Household, and their adherents in their hearts. Hence, this love remains a trust with the angels up to the Day of Resurrection. Then, the Archangel led me down to the earth and introduced me to its inhabitants. There Almighty Allah ordered the believers among the inhabitants of the earth to maintain love in their hearts for me, my Household, and their adherents; therefore, the believers of my nation shall keep this love as a trust and shall consider it in their treatment of my Household, up to the Day of Resurrection. Truly I say, if a man from my nation lives his entire worldly life worshipping Almighty Allah but meets Him bearing malice against my Household and my Sh¢`ah, Almighty Allah will not judge him but as a hypocrite.[1]

وَجَعَلَ لَهُ نَاصِراً. فَأَمَّا عَرَصَتُهُ فَالْقُرْآنُ، وَأَمَّا نُورُهُ فَالْحِكْمَةُ، وَأَمَّا حِصْنُهُ فَالْمَعْرُوفُ، وَأَمَّا أَنْصَارُهُ فَأَنَا وَأَهْلُ بَيْتِي وَشِيعَتُنَا. فَأَحِبُّوا أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَشِيعَتَهُمْ وَأَنْصَارَهُمْ؛ فَإِنَّهُ لَمَّا أُسْرِيَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا فَنَسَبَنِي جِبْرَئِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لأَِهْلِ السَّمَاءِ اسْتَوْدَعَ اللهُ حُبِّي وَحُبَّ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي وَشِيعَتِهِمْ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمَلاَئِكَةِ،

1- Shaykh al-Kulayn¢, *al-K¡f¢* 2:46, H.3.

فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُمْ وَدِيعَةٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ. ثُمَّ هَبَطَ بِي إِلَى أَهْلِ الأَرْضِ فَنَسَبَنِي إِلَى أَهْلِ الأَرْضِ فَاسْتَوْدَعَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حُبِّي وَحُبَّ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي وَشِيعَتِهِمْ فِي قُلُوبِ مُؤْمِنِي أُمَّتِي. فَمُؤْمِنُو أُمَّتِي يَحْفَظُونَ وَدِيعَتِي فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ. أَلاَ فَلَوْ أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي عَبَدَ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عُمْرَهُ أَيَّامَ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ لَقِيَ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مُبْغِضاً لأَهْلِ بَيْتِي وَشِيعَتِي مَا فَرَّجَ اللهُ صَدْرَهُ إِلاَّ عَنِ النِّفَاقِ.

Chapter Two:
Characteristics Of
The Virtuous Community

Undoubtedly, the general objectives of building a virtuous community contribute to the characteristics and features that are required in such a community. Likewise, these characteristics redound on the details of the necessity of building it. This fact may give reasons for the similarity in some points of these three aspects (i.e. objectives, characteristics, and features), yet there are differences with regard to different perspectives of any propounded point.

It is necessary to introduce the basic characteristics and features that must distinguish this virtuous community so that its individuals can play their essential roles in the history of Islam and perpetuate the roles of the Holy Imams (‘a) by defending Islam and safeguarding Muslim society.

In this discussion, we will summarize and catalogue these characteristics, including those previously mentioned.

SOUND BELIEF

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) constructed the virtuous community to ensure the maintenance of the genuine doctrines of Islam and insulate it from the influence of the intellectual and cultural components of the Roman, Persian, and Greek civilizations that led some groups of Muslims to atheism, apostasy, and intellectual corruption in the early centuries of Islam.

The Holy Imams (‘a) also aimed at keeping the virtuous community sound from cultural lethargy that inflicted the Muslim nation after being exposed to cultures of new nations that joined the Muslim world bringing with them huge fortunes, luxurious lifestyles and new methods of lustful entertainment.

Furthermore, the Holy Imams (‘a) warned the virtuous community about being manipulated by the psychological and spiritual reactions that led some groups of Muslims to pursue seclusion and self-isolation, as can be seen in Sufism and esotericism. These movements led other groups, such as the Khaw¡rij and the Qar¡mi§ah movements, to fall into the abyss of anarchism and openly rebel against Muslim society and its system of rule, canceling all duties and condemning all the common manners and habits of Muslim society as futile. This further led a third category to unfounded fanaticism and immoderation in emotions that changed into various sects and beliefs, including the Ghul¡t (extremists), the Naw¡¥ib (antagonists of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their followers), the Qadariyyah (fatalists), and the Mufawwi¤ah (indeterminists).

The Holy Imams (‘a) maintained a balanced lifestyle and instilled a sound belief in their followers so that they could preserve the genuine doctrines of Islam and possess the ability

to survive, co-exist, and act dynamically by activating, impressing and inspiring others with their firm faith.

Because of this fact, if we observe the movement of this virtuous community and its progress throughout the history of Islam, we will notice genuineness and deep-rootedness on the one hand and expansion, steadfastness and firmness on the other in spite of the persecution and attempts at eradication that this virtuous community had to encounter. Nevertheless, the individuals of this community did not flee from social realities or cloister themselves in distant areas of Muslim lands. On the contrary, they coexisted with their brethren in Muslim cities and in the centers of scientific, cultural, and religious knowledge, such as Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Middle Asia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, some important districts of Africa, countries of the Persian Gulf, and the Indian subcontinent (India and Pakistan). The virtuous community has thus included individuals from all nationalities, like the Arabs, Persians, Turks, Kurds, Indians, Berbers, Africans, and many more.

Thus, it is probable that the Holy Imams (‘a), having understood this fact, did not deem it necessary to exhort their followers to exert excessive effort in the domain of propagation, because true belief can perform this mission automatically when it is proposed and offered before a nation. In this respect, Shaykh al-Kulayn¢ has reported Th¡bit ibn Sa`¢d as saying that Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) once told him:

يَا ثَابِتُ، مَا لَكُمْ وَلِلنَّاسِ؟ كُفُّوا عَنِ النَّاسِ! وَلاَ تَدْعُوا أَحَداً إِلَى أَمْرِكُمْ. فَوَاللهِ لَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ

O Thibit, why are you arguing with the people? Stop debating with them (attempting to convince them to join your creed) and do not summon them to your belief. I swear by Allah that if all the inhabitants of the skies and all the inhabitants of the earth help each other to mislead a servant (of Allah)

السَّمَاءِ وَأَهْلَ الأَرْضِ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يُضِلُّوا عَبْداً يُرِيدُ اللهُ هُدَاهُ مَا اسْتَطَاعُوا. كُفُّوا عَنِ النَّاسِ وَلاَ يَقُلْ أَحَدُكُمْ أَخِي وَابْنُ عَمِّي وَجَارِي! فَإِنَّ اللهَ إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ خَيْراً طَيَّبَ رُوحَهُ، فَلاَ يَسْمَعُ بِمَعْرُوفٍ إِلاَّ عَرَفَهُ، وَلاَ بِمُنْكَرٍ إِلاَّ أَنْكَرَهُ، ثُمَّ يَقْذِفُ اللهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ كَلِمَةً يَجْمَعُ بِهَا أَمْرَهُ.

whom Almighty Allah wants to guide, they shall never be able to do so. Stop arguing with the people and do not impose your belief on anyone even if you believe one will respond because he is your brother, cousin, or neighbor. Verily, if Almighty Allah wants somebody to join the truth, He will make his soul responsive. As a result, he will follow that which is decent and reject that which is vile. Then, Almighty Allah will cast in his heart a word that will inspire the correct attitude.[1]

To make this clear, such commands to refrain from arguing with people about doctrine and such warnings against inviting them to accept beliefs are meant for no reason other than to avoid divisive disputes and unwanted discrepancies. This fact is confirmed by another tradition also reported by Shaykh al-Kulayn¢ from one of the Holy Imams (‘a):

وَلاَ تُخَاصِمُوا بِدِينِكُمُ النَّاسَ، فَإِنَّ

Do not dispute with people about your religion, for dispute gives rise to rumors.

1- Shaykh al-Kulayn¢, *al-K¡f¢* 2:213, H. 2.

الْمُخَاصَمَةَ مُمْرِضَةٌ لِلْقَلْبِ. فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَالَ لِنَبِيِّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: ﴿إِنَّكَ لا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾ وَقَالَ: ﴿أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

Almighty Allah has said to His Prophet (¥), 'Surely, you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases. (28:56)' He has also said, 'Will you then force mankind to become believers? (10/99)'[1]

At the same time, some other traditions encourage inviting others to the true faith when there is a suitable chance or when this would not lead to dispute, because inviting to the true faith is a religious duty.[2]

In this way, we can understand why the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have always laid stress on demonstration of the pillars of religion in general and loyalty to the divinely commissioned leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) (i.e. *wil¡yah*) in particular. They have also discriminated between Islam and atheism (*kufr*), and Islam and faith (*¢m¡n*). Of course, all such demonstrations mean to highlight the features of the true faith.

The distinctive feature of the faith of this virtuous community is love for Imam `Al¢ and the other eleven Imams (‘a) with the belief that they are the divinely

1- Shaykh al-Kulayn¢, *al-K¡f¢* 2:213-214.

2- This topic will be discussed along with its divergent aspects in the coming book, *Security System of the Virtuous Community* (security policies). In my thesis about Imam al-Mahd¢ (‘a), I have also shed light on this topic.

designated leaders of Muslims. According to some traditions, true faith is linked to *wil¡yah* (divinely commissioned leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)). Through an authentic chain of authority, Zur¡rah has reported Imam al-B¡qir (‘a) as saying:

بُنِيَ الإِسْلاَمُ عَلَى خَمْسَةِ أَشْيَاءَ: عَلَى الصَّلاَةِ، وَالزَّكَاةِ، وَالْحَجِّ، وَالصَّوْمِ، وَالْوِلاَيَةِ.

Islam is based on five things: *¥alit* (prayer), *zakit* (poor-rate), ¦*ajj* (pilgrimage), *¥awm* (fasting), and *wiliyah*.

Zurirah asked, “What is the best among these things?”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

اَلْوِلاَيَةُ أَفْضَلُ لأَنَّهَا مِفْتَاحُهُنَّ، وَالْوَلِيُّ هُوَ الدَّلِيلُ عَلَيْهِنَّ.

The best of them is *wiliyah*, because it is the key to the others and the *wal¢* is the guide to them.

Zurirah asked, “What is next in being the best?”

The Imam (‘a) answered, “Then comes prayer.”

Zurirah asked, “What is next?”

The Imam (‘a) answered, “Then comes *zakit*, because Almighty Allah has paired it with prayer and mentioned prayer first.”

Zurirah asked, “What is next?”

The Imam (‘a) answered, “Then comes ¦*ajj*.”

Zurirah asked, “What is next?”

The Imam (‘a) answered, “Then comes fasting.”[1]

1- Shaykh al-Kulayn¢, *al-K¡f¢* 2:18-19; al-°urr al-`Amil¢, *Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah* 1:7, H.2.

According to another tradition reported by Shaykh al-¯ad£q in his book of *al-Am¡l¢*, Ab£-°amzah al-Thum¡l¢ reported Imam `Al¢ ibn al-°usayn (Zayn al-ªbid¢n) (‘a) as saying:

قَالَ سَلْمَانُ الْفَارِسِيُّ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ: كُنْتُ جَالِساً عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ إِذْ أَقْبَلَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا عَلِيُّ، أَلاَ أُبَشِّرُكَ؟ قَالَ: بَلَى، يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ. قَالَ: هَذَا حَبِيبِي جِبْرَئِيلُ يُخْبِرُنِي عَنِ اللهِ جَلَّ جَلاَلُهُ أَنَّهُ قَدْ أَعْطَى مُحِبِّيكَ وَشِيعَتَكَ سَبْعَ خِصَالٍ: الرِّفْقَ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَالأُنْسَ عِنْدَ الْوَحْشَةِ، وَالنُّورَ عِنْدَ الظُّلْمَةِ، وَالأَمْنَ عِنْدَ الْفَزَعِ، وَالْقِسْطَ عِنْدَ الْمِيزَانِ، وَالْجَوَازَ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ، وَدُخُولَ الْجَنَّةِ قَبْلَ

Salmin al-Firis¢—may Allah have mercy upon him—narrated that he was with the Holy Prophet (¥) when `Al¢ ibn Ab¢-±ilib (‘a) joined them. The Holy Prophet (¥) said to him, ‘O `Al¢, May I convey some good news to you?’ ‘Yes, Allah’s Messenger! You may,’ answered `Al¢ (‘a). The Holy Prophet (¥) said, ‘Dear Archangel Gabriel has just informed me that Almighty Allah has bestowed 7 blessings on those who love you and are your followers. These are (1) lenience at the hour of death, (2) company during loneli-ness of the grave, (3) light in the darkness of the grave, (4) security against the horror of the Day of Resurrection, (5) justice at The Balance, (6) permission to cross the Discriminating Bridge, and (7) entry to Paradise eighty years before other nations.’[1]

1- Shaykh al-¯ad£q, *al-Am¡l¢*, p. 416, H. 548. Many traditions have demonstrated the same content of this tradition. For instance, see `All¡mah al-Majlis¢, *Bi¦¡r al-Anw¡r* 78:9, H. 4 as well as other reference books appertaining to qualities of the Sh¢`ah.

سَائِرِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الأُمَمِ بِثَمَانِينَ عَاماً.

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have specified a number of features and indications that confirm this love and loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in a person. The most eminent of these indications are piety, hard work, steadfastness against hardships, and self-sacrifice, epitomized by the practice of visiting the holy tomb of Imam al-°usayn (‘a) at Karbal¡', as is maintained by a number of traditions.

TURNING TO THE AHL AL-BAYT (‘A) TO OBTAIN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

Another essential feature that characterizes the individuals of the virtuous community from others is the issue of obtaining religious law from its genuine and authentic sources. They are also distinguished for deriving religious decisions about the settlement of disputes and regarding emerging issues from an ‘Infallible Imam’ (‘a), ‘virtuous man’ or ‘decent jurisprudent’.

Although all Muslims unanimously agree that the Holy Qur’¡n and Sunnah are the two basic sources of Islamic laws, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are distinguished from the other Muslims by a number of important points in this respect. These points are as follows:

Understanding the Holy Qur’an

The followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are characterized by turning to the Holy Imams (‘a) in the understanding of the Holy Qur’¡n and religious issues that depend upon the Holy Qur’¡n. They have learnt to distinguish between the abrogating and the abrogated texts of the Holy Qur’¡n, the decisive and the allegorical, the specific and the general and the summarized and the detailed. Likewise, they have learned the motives of the revelation of each verse as well as other points appertaining to the exegesis and interpretation of the Holy Qur’¡n.

All Muslims unanimously agree that `Al¢ and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were the most learned in the sciences of the Holy Qur’¡n. Authentic traditions reported by both Sunnis and Shiites demonstrate this fact.

In this regard, the Holy Prophet (¥) is reported to have said:

"How will you behave after me regarding the two Weighty Things?" He was asked, "Allah's Messenger, what are the two Weighty Things?" He (¥) explained, "The major Weighty Thing is Allah's Book. One of its edges is in Allah's Hand while the other is in yours; so, adhere to it persistently so that you shall never slip or stray. The minor Weighty Thing is my Progeny. Verily, these two things shall never separate from each other until they both join me at the Divine Pond. I have prayed to my Lord to guarantee this for me. So, do not precede them lest you shall perish and do not impose your knowledge on them, for they are verily more knowledgeable than you."[1]

"كَيْفَ تُخَلِّفُونَنِي فِي الثَّقَلَيْنِ؟" قِيلَ: "وَمَا الثَّقَلاَنِ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ؟" قَالَ: "الأَكْبَرُ كِتَابُ اللهِ؛ سَبَبٌ طَرَفُهُ بِيَدِ اللهِ وَطَرَفُهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ. فَتَمَسَّكُوا بِهِ لَنْ تَزِلُّوا وَلَنْ تَضِلُّوا. وَالأَصْغَرُ عِتْرَتِي؛ فَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ. وَسَأَلْتُ لَهُمَا ذَلِكَ رَبِّي. وَلاَ تَقَدَّمُوهُمَا فَتَهْلَكُوا، وَلاَ تُعَلِّمُوهُمَا فَإِنَّهُمَا أَعْلَمُ مِنْكُمْ."

Acquaintance with the Holy Sunnah

The followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) always turn to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to acquaint themselves with the Holy Sunnah, which has been exposed to problems of forgery and

1- Al-±abar¡n¢, *al-Mu`jam al-Kab¢r* 3:66, H. 2681; Ibn °ajar, *al-¯aw¡`iq al-Mu¦riqah*, pp. 228-229.

obscurity. The reason for such problems can be summed up in the following points:

(1) Some Prophetic traditions have been unfaithfully transmitted and intentionally distorted.

(2) The texts of other traditions have been separated from the circumstances under which they were uttered.

(3) Many traditions about the Holy Prophet (¥) have been invented, forged, and fabricated.

(4) Some genuine Prophetic traditions were suspended due to certain personal views.

(5) Some people intentionally disregarded some genuine traditions claiming that they served no interest for Islam. As a result, confusion and immense commotion overshadowed some Islamic laws.

One of the distinctive features of the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) was that they turned to the Holy Imams (‘a) alone[1] to receive, understand, and learn the Holy Sunnah. They believed that the Imams (‘a) held the Holy Sunnah in

1- The followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) accept the report of any trustworthy person who reports from one of the Holy Infallibles (‘a); they, therefore accept generally the reports of the trustworthy reporters even if they follow other Muslim sects or jurisprudential schools other than the Ahl al-Bayt’s (‘a). By doing so, they in reality accept the sayings and judgments of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) alone, because a very limited number of traditions that are reported by other than the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) has been proven authentic while all the others have not been proven so. These very few accepted narrations are called ‘*al-nabaw¢* (the Prophetic traditions)’ and famously known by all Muslims who transmitted them from one generation to another. However, some scholars also doubt such narrations because their chains of authority have not been found adequately authentic.

its entirety without need to turn to any other conjectural points of evidence to reach the true religious law.

Acting upon the Verdicts of an Upright, Living, Well-Versed Jurisprudent

In the process of receiving religious law, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are restricted to taking such laws from a just and responsible (*`¡dil*)[1] *mujtahid* (well-versed jurisprudent) who is known to be experienced in Muslim jurisprudence. He must be extremely pious and God-fearing. The truth about his character must be acquired through personal investigation and a sense of responsibility, free from the intimidation of rulers.

Acting according to a *mujtahid’s* verdicts and judgments and becoming acquainted with religious conditions about a certain issue or dispute, as well as compliance with the verdicts of a living[2] *mujtahid*, must be restricted to a person who has lived the event and whose characteristics and qualities can be easily observed by people.

This point has given the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) a good opportunity to move within the true framework of Muslim legislation. They have, therefore, kept themselves away from dilemmas that are faced by the followers of other Muslim sects regarding verdicts, leading them to massive contradiction, discrepancy, and disputes about verdicts, judgments, and conditions. This may be the logic

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1- Although the Arabic word *`¡dil* literally means impartial, the characteristic of *`ad¡lah* goes beyond justice to include decency.

2- Although the stipulation of acting upon the verdicts of an living *mujtahid* is not unanimously agreed upon by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School, the greater majority of scholars, in the recent ages at least, comply with this term.

behind the Holy Prophet (¥) highlighting the significance of referring to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) with regard to the laws of Islam in addition to the significance of loyalty to their divinely commissioned leadership. Through many authentic and uninterruptedly reported traditions, the Holy Prophet (¥) emphasized this on many occasions. One form of such emphasis is the famous tradition known as *°ad¢th al-Thaqalayn* (the Two Weighty Things) in which the Holy Prophet (¥) says:

إنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ؛ كِتَابَ اللهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي، مَا إنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي أَبَداً، وَلَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

Indeed, I leave among you the two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my Household—the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). If you adhere to them, you shall never stray after me. They shall never leave one another until they both join me at the Divine Pond.[1]

In the same way, the Holy Imams (‘a) have laid great emphasis on referring to them (*marji`iyyah*) regarding the religious laws through numerous clear-cut traditions. They have thus educated their followers to carry out this duty and warned them against falling into deviations by depending upon conjecture or equitable preferences (*isti¦s¡n*) in the process of attaining religious law.

1- Ibn °ajar: *al-¯aw¡`iq al-Mu¦riqah* p. 341; al-Muttaq¢ al-Hind¢: *Kanz al-`Umm¡l* 1:185-189.

COMMITMENT TO THE HIGHEST RANK OF HUMAN PERFECTION

In the view of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), achieving the highest ranks of human perfection is one of the objectives of Islam and signifies the essential quality that the individuals of the virtuous community must possess so that they can play their roles in human history adequately. Only by doing so can these individuals influence the progress of human history and bring victory, wealth, and divine fortune to a society. Declaring this fact, the Holy Qur’¡n states:

ٱ ٻ ٻ ٻ ٻ پ پ پ پ ڀ ڀ ڀ ڀ ٺ ٺ ٿ ٿ

And if the people of the towns had believed and shown piety, We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned. (7/96)

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) emphasized this not only in the course of educating their followers (Sh¢`ah), but also while demonstrating their identity and personality. In this respect, Imam al-Ri¤¡ (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (¥) as saying to Imam `Al¢ (‘a),

يَـا عَلِـيُّ؛ طُوبَـى لِـمَنْ أَحَبَّكَ وَصَدَّقَ بِكَ، وَوَيْـلٌ لِـمَنْ أَبْـغَضَكَ وَكَـذَّبَ بِكَ. مُـحِبُّـوكَ مَـعْـرُوفُـونَ فِـي الـسَّمـاءِ الـسَّابِـعَـة وَالأَرْضِ الـسَّابِـعَـة الـسُّفْـلَـى وَمَـا بَـيْـنَ ذلِـكَ. هُمْ أَهْلُ الـدِّيـنِ

O `Al¢, blessed be those who love you and believe in you. Woe be to those who bear malice against you and belie you. Your devotees are known by the inhabitants of the Seventh Sky, the seventh layer of the earth, and whatever exists between these two. They are the people of religiousness, piety, noble manners, and submission to Almighty Allah. Their eyes and

وَالوَرْعِ وَالسَّمْتِ الْحَسَنِ وَالتَّوَاضُعِ لله عَزَّ وَجَلَّ؛ خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ، وَجِلَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ الله عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَقَدْ عَرَفُوا حَقَّ وِلاَيَتِكَ.

their hearts are always full of fear whenever Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, is mentioned. They have recognized their duties towards your (divinely commissioned) leadership.[1]

In this regard, traditions have described a number of attributes and basic features that the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) must enjoy. These features are as follows:

Worship and Asceticism

Traditions have laid emphasis on all aspects of asceticism and perseverance in worship. Many traditions carry an excellent depiction of the exemplary worship of the Ahl al-Bayt’s followers. In this regard, Abul-Miqd¡d has reported Imam al-B¡qir (‘a) as saying to him:

يَا أَبَا الْمِقْدَادِ؛ إِنَّمَا شِيعَةُ عَلِيٍّ الشَّاحِبُونَ النَّاحِلُونَ الذَّابِلُونَ: ذَابِلَةٌ شِفَاهُهُمْ، خَمِيصَةٌ بُطُونُهُمْ، مُتَغَيِّرَةٌ أَلْوَانُهُمْ، مُصْفَرَّةٌ وُجُوهُهُمْ. إِذَا جَنَّهُمُ اللَّيْلُ اتَّخَذُوا الأَرْضَ فِرَاشاً وَاسْتَقْبَلُوا الأَرْضَ بِجِبَاهِهِمْ. كَثِيرٌ

O Abul-Miqdid, the Sh¢`ah of `Al¢ are only those who are pale, thin, and feeble. Their lips are faded because of worship and their stomachs are emaciated. Their faces are pale and yellowish. When night comes upon them, they take the ground as their beds and welcome the ground with their foreheads. Their prostrations are long, their teardrops heavy, and their prayers innumerable. While people rejoice, they

1- Shaykh al-¯ad£q: *`Uy£n Akhb¡r al-Ri¤¡*, 1:261, H.21.

remain in grief.[1]

سُجُودُهُمْ، كَثِيرَةٌ
دُمُوعُهُمْ، كَثِيرٌ
دُعَاؤُهُمْ، كَثِيرٌ
بُكَاؤُهُمْ. يَفْرَحُ النَّاسُ
وَهُمْ مَحْزُونُونَ...

Shaykh al-Muf¢d, in his book of *al-Irsh¡d* and Shaykh al-±£s¢, in his book of *al-Am¡l¢*, have reported the following:

One luminous night the Commander of the Faithful, Imam `Al¢, (‘a) went out of his house towards the graveyard. A group of people followed him. He turned towards them and asked who they were.

“We are your followers (Sh¢`ah), Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n,” they answered.

He said, “But I cannot see the marks of a true Sh¢`ah on your faces.”

“What are the marks of a true Sh¢`ah?” asked they.

He (‘a) said:

The true Sh¢`ah are pale-faced because of staying up at night, thin-stomached because of fasting, and dry-lipped because of endless praying to Almighty Allah. The dust of humility covers them.”[2]

صُفْرُ الوُجُوهِ مِنَ السَّهَرِ، عُمْشُ العُيُونِ مِنَ البُكَاءِ، حُدْبُ الظُّهُورِ مِنَ القِيَامِ، خُمْصُ البُطُونِ مِنَ الصِّيَامِ، ذُبْلُ الشِّفَاهِ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ، عَلَيْهِمْ غَبَرَةُ الْخَاشِعِينَ.

Further details of these features described by Imam `Al¢ (‘a) for the true Sh¢`ah can be envisaged from his discourse

1- Shaykh al-¯ad£q, *al-Khi¥¡l* p. 2, H. 4.
2- *Al-Irsh¡d*, p. 114; *al-Am¡l¢*, p. 216, H. 377.

with al-A¦naf ibn Qays as reported by Shaykh al-¯ad£q in his book of *¯if¡t al-Sh¢`ah* (Qualities of the Sh¢`ah):

Al-A¦naf ibn Qays once invited Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n (‘a) to al-Ba¥rah after the Battle of the Camel. When Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n responded to the invitation, he asked al-A¦naf to also include his companions in the invitation. Some very reverent people with withered skin came in.

“O Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n,” asked al-A¦naf, “What has befallen these people? Was it scarcity of food or the terror of war?”

Answering him, Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n (‘a) said:

لاَ يَـــا أَحْنَـــفُ! إنَّ اللهَ سُـــبْحَانَـهُ أَحَـــبَّ أَقْـوَاماً تَـنَسَّكُوا لَـهُ فِـــي دَارِ الـــدُّنْـيَا تَـنَسُّكَ مَـنْ هَجَمَ عَلَـى مَـا عَلِمَ مِنْ قُـرْبِـهِمْ مِنْ يَـــوْمِ الْـقِـيَـامَـةِ مِـــنْ قَـبْـــلِ أَنْ يُشَاهِدُوهَا فَـحَمَلُـوا أَنْـفُسَـــهُمْ عَلَـــى مَـجْهُودِهَـــا وَكَـــانُـوا إذَا ذَكَـــرُوا صَـبَاحَ يَـــوْمِ الْـعَـــرْضِ عَلَـى اللهِ سُبْحَانَـهُ تَـوَهَّمُـوا خُرُوجَ عُنُقٍ يَـخْرُجُ مِنَ الـنَّـــارِ يَـحْشُـــرُ الْـخَلاَئِقَ إلَـى رَبِّـهِـمْ تَـبَـــارَكَ وَتَـعَـــالَـى وَكِـتَـابٍ يَـبْـدُو فِـيـهِ عَلَـى رُؤُوسِ الأَشْـهَـادِ فَـضَـــائِـحُ ذُنُـــوبِـهِمْ، فَـكَـــادَتْ أَنْـفُسُـــهُمْ

No, A¦naf. Their state is not due to either. Allah, the Glorified, loved some people, those who served Him with devotion in this world as if they were heavily burdened, because He knew their dread of the Day of Resurrection before they had witnessed it. My companions have therefore exerted all their possible efforts in this regard. When they imagine the morning when all creatures will appear in the presence of their Lord, they imagine a rope coming out of Hell to gather all the creatures before their Lord and visualize the record that will open before the Witnesses and uncover all their sins. Thus, their souls turn to flee, their hearts seek escape with wings of fear, and their minds toss hither and thither as if boiling in a cauldron. Though they long (to meet Allah) with the

longing of one lost in the darkness, they are distressed and afraid because of that to which they have dedicated themselves. Thus, they have become weak-bodied, broken-hearted, gloomy-faced, dry-lipped, and thin-stomached. You see them as if they are drunk; they talk in the loneliness of nights and are as worn out as their shriveled skins. They have sincerely offered their acts to Allah, overtly and in private. Their hearts have never felt secure because of their fear of Allah. They have guarded their actions knowing they were the domes of their tribute. Were you to see them at night—when eyes sleep, silence prevails, and birds remain calm and motionless in their nests—the threatening horror of the Day of Resurrection deters them from sleeping, being reminded of Allah saying, "Did the people of the towns think themselves secure from Our wrath that could strike them at night during their sleep? (7:97)" So, they wake up panic-stricken, and hurry to their prayers, crying. Sometimes they weep and at other times praise Allah. In their places of worship, their wailing resounds. On gloomy nights,

تَسِيلُ سَيَلاَناً أَوْ تَطِيرُ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِأَجْنِحَةِ الْخَوْفِ طَيَرَاناً، وَتُفَارِقُهُمْ عُقُولُهُمْ إِذَا غَلَتْ بِهِمْ مِنْ أَجْلِ التَّجَرُّدِ إِلَى اللهِ سُبْحَانَهُ غَلَيَاناً. فَكَانُوا يِجِنُّونَ حَنِينَ الوَالِهِ فِي دُجَى الظُّلَمِ، وَكَانُوا يُفْجَعُونَ مِنْ خَوْفِ مَا أَوْقَفُوا عَلَيْهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ، فَمَضَوْا ذُبُلَ الْجِسَامِ، حَزِينَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ، كَالِحَةً وُجُوهُهُمْ، ذَابِلَةً شِفَاهُهُمْ، خَامِصَةً بُطُونُهُمْ، تَرَاهُمْ سُكَارَى. سُمَّارُ وَحْشَةٍ بِاللَّيْلِ، مُتَخَشِّعُونَ كَأَنَّهُمْ شِنَانٌ بَوَالٍ، قَدْ أَخْلَصُوا لِلّهِ أَعْمَالَهُمْ سِرّاً وَعَلاَنِيَةً، فَلَمْ تَأْمَنْ مِنْ فَزَعِهِ قُلُوبُهُمْ، بَلْ كَانُوا كَمَنْ حَرَسُوا قِبَابَ خَرَاجِهِمْ. فَلَوْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ فِي لَيْلَتِهِمْ، وَقَدْ نَامَتِ الْعُيُونُ، وَهَدَأَتِ

they weep. Were you, O A¦naf, to see them at night either standing or with backs bent! They recite parts of the Qur'in in their prayers. Their wailings, lamentations, and sighs are heart-rending. If they sigh, you think the fire (of Hell) has taken them by the throat. If they wail, you think their necks are in the noose. If you look at them during the day, you see them as people who "walk gently on the earth," speak "politely to people," and "when addressed by the ignorant ones, their only response is, 'Peace be with you.'" And "when they come across something impious, they pass by, ignoring it." They prevent their feet from following and investigating people's defects, stop their tongues from speaking ill of people's reputations, check their ears from hearing evil about others, turn their eyes away from (looking at) the acts of disobedience to Allah, and direct them towards the Abode of Peace—whoever enters it will be saved from doubt and grief. It seems, O A¦naf, that you have been engaged in looking at a face that afflicts you with various sorts of misfortunes the very moment

الأَصْوَاتُ، وَسَكَنَتِ الْحَرَكَاتُ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ فِي الْوُكُورِ وَقَدْ نَهْنَهَهُمْ هَوْلُ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ بِالْوَعِيدِ عَنِ الرُّقَادِ كَمَا قَالَ سُبْحَانَهُ: "أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَى أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتاً وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ؟" فَاسْتَيْقَظُوا إِلَيْهَا فِزِعِينَ، وَقَامُوا إِلَى صَلاَتِهِمْ مُعَوِّلِينَ، بَاكِينَ تَارَةً وَأُخْرَى مُسَبِّحِينَ، يَبْكُونَ فِي مَحَارِيبِهِمْ وَيَرِنُّونَ، يَصْطَفُّونَ لَيْلَةً مُظْلِمَةً بَهْمَاءَ يَبْكُونَ. فَلَوْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَا أَحْنَفُ فِي لَيْلَتِهِمْ قِيَاماً عَلَى أَطْرَافِهِمْ، مُنْحَنِيَةً ظُهُورُهُمْ يَتْلُونَ أَجْزَاءَ الْقُرْآنِ لِصَلاَتِهِمْ، قَدِ اشْتَدَّتْ إِعْوَالُهُمْ وَنَحِيبُهُمْ وَزَفِيرُهُمْ، إِذَا زَفَرُوا خِلْتَ النَّارُ قَدْ أَخَذَتْ مِنْهُمْ إِلَى حَلاَقِيمِهِمْ، وَإِذَا

أَعْوَلُوا حَسِبْتَ السَّلاَسِلُ قَدْ صُفِّدَتْ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ، فَلَوْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ فِي نَهَارِهِمْ إِذاً لَرَأَيْتَ قَوماً "يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الأَرْضِ هَوْناً" وَيَقُولُونَ "لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً فَإِذَا "خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلاَماً" "وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَاماً". قَدْ قَيَّدُوا أَقْدَامَهُمْ مِنَ التَّهَمَاتِ، وَأَبْكَمُوا أَلْسِنَتَهُمْ أَنْ يَتَكَلَّمُوا فِي أَعْرَاضِ النَّاسِ، وَسَجَّمُوا أَسْمَاعَهُمْ أَنْ يَلِجَهَا خَوْضُ خَائِضٍ، وَكَحَّلُوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ بِغَضِّ الْبَصَرِ عَنِ الْمَعَاصِي، وَانْتَحَوْا دَارَ السَّلاَمِ الَّتِي مَنْ دَخَلَهَا كَانَ آمِناً مِنَ الرَّيْبِ وَالأَحْزَانِ. فَلَعَلَّكَ يَا أَحْنَفُ شَغَلَكَ نَظَرُكَ فِي وَجْهِ وَاحِدَةٍ تُبْدِي الأَسْقَامَ بِغَضَارَةِ وَجْهِهَا، وَدَارٍ قَدْ أَشْغِلْتَ بِنَقْشِ

that you enjoy looking at its prosperous appearance; and you have been engaged in looking at the drawings of the exterior of that lodging, as well as its hanging curtains, while wind and hot weather are destroying its fruits within. Nevertheless, that lodging, which is definitely not your permanent abode, has distracted you from (working for) the Final Abode that Allah created from a white pearl, deep rivers, and planted trees, and cast shadows of ripe fruit over it, and filled it with young Paradisiacal women (houris). There He will lodge (permanently) His disciples and the obedient people. Were you, O A¦naf, to see them when they will come to their Lord, the Glorified! When their mares are stricken, their riding camels will produce a sound that no one has ever heard. A cloud that rains musk and saffron will overshadow them. Their mares will neigh among the plants of the gardens (of Paradise), and their camels will take them over the rising slopes of saffron. They will walk solemnly on pearls and corals. The curators of Paradise will receive them with pulpits of basil. A wind from the direction of the Divine Throne will then

disperse over them jasmine and daisies. When they approach the portals (of Paradise), Ri¤wiη (the Paradise doorkeeper) will open these portals before them and they will prostrate themselves before Allah in the courtyard of Paradise. Allah, the Omnipotent, will say to them, “Raise your heads. I have freed you from the burden of worship and housed you in the bliss of contentment.” If you, O A¦naf, disregard that which I have related, you will be left in shirts of tar, run between blazing fire and boiling water, and be served with boiling water. On that day, many spines will be broken, many faces distorted, and many deformed and beaten on the nose. Likewise, chains will gouge the palms of many and bands will choke the necks. Were you, O A¦naf, to see them slipping into the valleys of Hell and climbing the mountains there while dressed in tar and grouped with the sinful and the devils! If they call for help against the fire, scorpions and snakes will attack them. Were you also to see the caller who will say, “O people of Paradise and its bliss, jewels, and garments, you will live forever and you will never die.” Only then will they lose hope

رَوَاقِهَا وَسُتُورٍ قَدْ
عَلَّقْتَهَا، وَالرِّيحُ
وَالآجَامُ مُوَكَّلَةٌ
بِثَمَرِهَا. وَلَيْسَتْ
دَارُكَ هَذِهِ دَارَ
الْبَقَاءِ فَأَحْمَتْكَ
الدَّارُ الَّتِي خَلَقَهَا
اللهُ سُبْحَانَهُ مِنْ
لُؤْلُؤَةٍ بَيْضَاءَ،
فَشَقَقَ فِيهَا
أَنْهَارَهَا، وَغَرَسَ
فِيهَا أَشْجَارَهَا،
وَأَظَلَّ عَلَيْهَا
بِالنُّضَجِ مِنْ
أَثْمَارِهَا وَكَبَسَهَا
بِالْعَوَاتِقِ مِنْ
حُورِهَا. ثُمَّ أَسْكَنَهَا
أَوْلِيَاءَهُ وَأَهْلَ
طَاعَتِهِ. فَلَوْ
رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَا أَحْنَفُ
وَقَدْ قَدِمُوا عَلَى
زِيَادَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ
سُبْحَانَهُ فَإِذَا ضُرِبَتْ
جَنَائِبُهُمْ صَوَّتَتْ
رَوَاحِلُهُمْ بِأَصْوَاتٍ
لَمْ يَسْمَعِ السَّامِعُونَ
بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا،
وَأَظَلَّتْهُمْ غَمَامَةٌ
فَأَمْطَرَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْمِسْكَ وَالرَّادَنَ،
وَصَهَلَتْ خُيُولُهَا بَيْنَ
أَغْرَاسِ تِلْكَ
الْجِنَانِ، وَتَخَلَّلَتْ

بِهِمْ نُوقُهُمْ بَيْنَ كُثُبِ الزَّعْفَرَانِ وَيَتَّطِئُ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَقْدَامِهِمُ اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ وَاسْتَقْبَلَتْهُمْ قَهَارِمَتُهَا بِمَنَابِرِ الرَّيْحَانِ. وَهَاجَتْ لَهُمْ رِيحٌ مِنْ قِبَلِ الْعَرْشِ فَنَثَرَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْيَاسَمِينَ وَالأُقْحُوَانَ، وَذَهَبُوا إِلَى بَابِهَا فَيَفْتَحُ لَهُمُ الْبَابَ رِضْوَانُ ثُمَّ يَسْجُدُونَ لِلّه فِي فَنَاءِ الْجِنَانِ. فَقَالَ لَهُمُ الْجَبَّارُ: إِرْفَعُوا رُؤوسَكُمْ، فَإِنِّي قَدْ رَفَعْتُ عَنْكُمْ مَؤونَةَ الْعِبَادَةِ، وَأَسْكَنْتُكُمْ جَنَّةَ الرِّضْوَانِ. فَإِنْ فَاتَكَ يَا أَحْنَفُ مَا ذَكَرْتُ لَكَ فِي صَدْرِ كَلاَمِي، لَتُتْرَكُنَّ فِي سَرَابِيلِ الْقَطِرَانِ وَلَتُطَوَّفَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آنٍ،

completely. The doors will close and relationships will be cut off. On that day, many old men will mourn their old age, many youths will mourn their youth, and many women will bewail their scandals. The screens (separating them from Hell) will be removed. On that day, many will be dipped into and detained between the layers of Hell. It is a dip that will cause you to wear a garment–after having worn linen clothes, drunk water that was cooled, and eaten various meals—which will turn every single smooth hair grey and gouge out the eye with which you saw your dear ones. This is what Allah has prepared for the offenders and that was what Allah has prepared for the God-fearing.[1]

1- Shaykh al-¯ad£q, *¯if¡t al-Sh¢`ah*, English version translated by Badr Shahin, pp. 329-336.

وَلَتُسْقَيَنَّ شَرَاباً
حَارَّ الْغَلَيَانِ فِي
أَنْضَاجِهِ، فَكَمْ
يَؤْمَئِذٍ فِي النَّارِ
مِنْ صُلْبٍ مَحْطُومٍ
وَوَجْهٍ مَهْشُومٍ وَمُشَوَّهٍ
مَضْرُوبٍ عَلَى
الْخُرْطُومِ، قَدْ أَكَلَتِ
الْجَامِعَةُ كَفَّهُ،
وَالْتَحَمَ الطَّوْقُ
بِعُنُقِهِ. فَلَوْ
رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَا أَحْنَفُ
يَنْحَدِرُونَ فِي
أَوْدِيَتِهَا، وَيَصْعَدُونَ
جِبَالَهَا، وَقَدْ
أُلْبِسُوا الْمُقَطَّعَاتِ
مِنَ القَطِرَانِ،
وَأُقْرِنُوا مَعَ
فُجَّارِهَا
وَشَيَاطِينِهَا، فَإِذَا
اسْتَغَاثُوا بِأَسْوَأِ
أَخْذٍ مِنْ حَرِيقٍ شَدَّتْ
عَلَيْهِمْ عَقَارِبُهَا
وَحَيَّاتُهَا، وَلَوْ
رَأَيْتَ مُنَادِياً
يُنَادِي وَهُوَ يَقُولُ:
يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ
وَنَعِيمِهَا، وَيَا أَهْلَ
حُلِيِّهَا وَحُلَلِهَا،
خُلُودٌ فَلاَ مَوْتَ،
فَعِنْدَهَا يَنْقَطِعُ
رَجَاؤُهُمْ، وَتَنْغَلِقُ
الأَبْوَابُ، وَتَنْقَطِعُ

بِهِمُ الأَسْبَابُ. فَكَمْ
يَوْمَئِذٍ مِنْ شَيْخٍ
يُنَادِي وَاشَيْبَتَاهُ!
وَكَمْ مِنْ شَابٍّ يُنَادِي
وَاشَبَابَاهُ! وَكَمْ مِنِ
امْرَأَةٍ تُنَادِي
وَافَضِيحَتَاهُ! هُتِكَتْ
عَنْهُمُ السُّتُورُ، فَكَمْ
يَوْمَئِذٍ مِنْ مَغْمُوسٍ
بَيْنَ أَطْبَاقِهَا
مَحْبُوسٌ. يَا لَكَ
غَمْسَةٌ أَلْبَسَتْكَ بَعْدَ
لِبَاسِ الكُتَّانِ
وَالْمَاءِ الْمُبَرَّدِ
عَلَى الْجُدْرَانِ وَأَكْلِ
الطَّعَامِ أَلْوَاناً
بَعْدَ أَلْوَانٍ لِبَاساً
لَمْ يَدَعْ لَكَ شَعْراً
نَاعِماً كُنْتَ مُطْعِمَهُ
إِلاَّ بَيَّضَهُ وَلاَ عَيْناً
كُنْتَ تُبْصِرُ بِهَا إِلَى
حَبِيبٍ إِلاَّ فَقَأَهَا،
هَذَا مَا أَعَدَّ اللهُ
لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ، وَذَلِكَ
مَا أَعَدَّ اللهُ
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

Another depiction has been reported by al-Kar¡chak¢ in his book of *Kanz al-Faw¡'id*[1] as reported by Nawf al-Bakk¡l¢[2] from Imam `Al¢ (‘a) in an address to a group of his

1- *Kanz al-Faw¡'id* 1:87-88; *Bi¦¡r al-Anw¡r* 68:191, H. 47.
2- *Kanz al-Faw¡'id* 1:88-92; *Bi¦¡r al-Anw¡r* 68:192-196, H. 48.

companions among whom was Hamm¡m ibn `Ab¡dah ibn Khaytham. A part of this discourse has been recorded by al-Shar¢f al-Ra¤¢ in *Nahj al-Bal¡ghah*.[1]

1- *Nahj al-Bal¡ghah*, Sermon No. 193. This sermon is as follows:
It is related that a companion of Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n ('a) called Hamm¡m, who was a man devoted to worship, said to him "O Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n ('a), describe to me the pious men in such a way that I can see them." Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n ('a) avoided responding to him and, instead said, O Hamm¡m, fear Allah and perform good acts because "verily, Allah is with those who guard themselves against evil and those who do good to others. (16:128)"
Hamm¡m was not satisfied with this reply; he therefore forced him to speak. Thereupon, Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n ('a) praised and extolled Allah, invoked His blessings upon the Holy Prophet (¥), and spoke thus:
Now then, Allah the Glorified, the Sublime, created (the things of) creation. He created them without having any need for their obedience or need to be safe from their sins, because the sin of anyone who sins does not harm Him nor does the obedience of anyone who obeys Him benefit Him. He has distributed among them their livelihood, and has assigned them their positions in the world.
Thus, among the God-fearing are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their dress is moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they use their ears to gain that knowledge which is beneficial to them. They remain, in the time of trials, as though they are in comfort. If there had not been fixed periods (of life) ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of (their) eagerness for the reward and fear of chastisement. The greatness of the Creator permeates their hearts and, as a result, everything else appears small in their eyes. Thus to them Paradise is before them as though they see it and are enjoying its favors. They also feel that Hell is before them as if they see it and are suffering punishment in it.
Their hearts are grieved, they are protected against evils, their bodies

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are thin, their needs are scanty, and their souls are chaste. They endure (hardship) for a short while, and in consequence they secure comfort forever. It is a beneficial transaction that Allah made easy for them. The world aimed at them, but they did not aim at it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it by paying the ransom.

During night they stand on their feet reading portions of the Qur'¡n and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse that brings about eagerness (for Paradise), they pursue it avidly, their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. When they come across a verse that concerns fear (of Hell), they picture it in their minds and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bow and prostrate themselves–touching their foreheads, palms, knees and toes–and beseech Allah, the Sublime, for their deliverance. During the day, they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear (of Allah) has made them thin like arrows. Whoever looks at them believes they are sick, although they are not, or that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern (i.e., fear) has made them seem such.

They are not satisfied with their meager good acts, and do not regard their major acts as great. They always reproach themselves and are afraid of the unacceptability of their deeds. When any one of them is spoken of highly, he says: "I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know myself. O Allah, do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know.

The qualities that you will see in one of them is that he has strength in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness in (seeking) knowledge in forbearance, moderation in riches, devotion in worship, gracefulness in hunger, endurance in hardship, desire for the lawful, pleasure in guidance and hatred for greed. He performs virtuous deeds but still feels afraid. In the evening, he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning, his anxiety is to engage in remembrance of (Allah). He passes the night in fear and rises in the morning in joy—fear lest night passes in forgetfulness and joy over the favor and mercy he has received. If his

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self refuses to endure a thing it does not like, he still does not grant its request for what it likes. The coolness of his eye lies in what is to last forever, while from the things (of this world) that will not last he keeps aloof. He transfuses knowledge with forbearance, and speech with action.

You will see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed. Good alone is expected from him. Evil from him is not to be feared. Even if he is found among those who forget (Allah) he is counted among those who remember (Him), but if he is among the rememberers he is not counted among the forgetful. He forgives him who is unjust to him, and he gives to him who deprives him. He behaves well with him who behaves ill with him.

Indecent speech is far from him, his utterance is lenient, his vices non-existent, his virtues abide, good precedes him and mischief has turned its face (from him). He is dignified during calamities, patient in distress, and thankful during ease. He does not commit excess even towards him whom he hates, and does not commit sin for the sake of him whom he loves. He admits truth before evidence is brought against him. He does not misappropriate what is placed in his trust nor forget what he is required to remember. He does not utter profanities, cause harm to his neighbors, feel happy at the misfortunes of others, enter into wrong nor abandon the boundaries of right. If he is silent, this silence does not grieve him, if he laughs he does not raise his voice, and if he is wronged he endures until Allah takes revenge on his behalf. His own self is in distress because of his actions, while the people are in ease from them. He puts himself in hardship for the sake of the next life, and makes people feel safe. His keeping away from others is for the sake of asceticism and purification, and his nearness to those to whom he is near is by way of leniency and mercifulness. His keeping away is not due to vanity or feeling of greatness, nor his nearness due to deceit and cheating.

It is related that, after this speech, Hamm¡m passed into a deep swoon and then expired. Then Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n ('a) said: Verily, by Allah, I feared this would happen to him. Then he added: Effective

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Practical Belief in Wilāyah

One of the characteristics of the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is conformity between their claim of Sh¢`ism and loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) on the one hand, and practical patterning after them on the other. Islam has highlighted this as one of its most significant principles. The Holy Qur’¡n says:

گ گ گ ں ڻ ڻ ڻ ڻ ۀ ہ ہ ہ ھ ھ ھ ے

O you who believe: Why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do. (61/2-3)

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have also called attention to this principle as they established connections between faith and practice and clearly stated that perfection of faith cannot be achieved without putting faith into practice. In the coming discussions, more light will be shed on this topic. Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) is reported to have said:

يَنْبَغِي لِمَنِ إدَّعَى هَذَا الأَمْرَ فِي السِّرِّ أَنْ يَأْتَيَ عَلَيْهِ بِبُرْهَانٍ فِي الْعَلاَنِيَةِ... يُحِلُّ حَلاَلَ اللهِ، وَيُحَرِّمُ

He who claims embracing this faith (i.e. loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)) within one’s heart must provide overt proof....He must commit to all that which Almighty Allah has deemed lawful, refrain from whatever He has deemed unlawful,

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advice produces such effects on receptive minds.
Someone said to him: O Am¢r al-Mu’min¢n, how is it you do not receive such an effect? Am¢r al-Mu’min¢n (‘a) replied: Woe to you. For death there is a fixed hour that cannot be exceeded, and a cause which does not change. Be careful, never repeat what Satan just put on your tongue. (*From Syed Ali Reza’s translation of Nahj al-Balaghah*).

and show an outward appearance that proves his inner belief.[1]

حَرَامَ اللهِ، وَيَكُونُ لَهُ ظَاهِرٌ يُصَدِّقُ بَاطِنَهُ.

He (‘a) is also reported to have said:

Verily, he who claims being one of our followers in words but violates our deeds and traditions is not one of our Sh¢`ah. Our Sh¢`ah are only those who concur with us in words and intentions, imitate our traditions, and emulate our deeds. These, indeed, are our Sh¢`ah.[2]

لَيْسَ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا مَنْ قَالَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَخَالَفَنَا فِي أَعْمَالِنَا وَآثَارِنَا؛ وَلَكِنْ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا مَنْ وَافَقَنَا بِلِسَانِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَاتَّبَعَ آثَارَنَا وَعَمِلَ عَمَلَنَا. أُولَئِكَ شِيعَتُنَا.

Through an authentic chain of authority, al-Kashsh¢ reported D¡w£d ibn Farqad to have said that he heard Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) saying:

My companions are verily the people of understanding and piety. Hence, he who does not enjoy understanding and piety is not my companion.[3]

إِنَّ أَصْحَابِي أُولُوا النُّهَى وَالتُّقَى؛ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ النُّهَى وَالتُّقَى فَلَيْسَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِي.

1- Al-Nu`m¡n¢, *al-Ghaybah*, p. 113, H. 7.
2- *Tafs¢r al-Im¡m al-`Askar¢*, p. 330.
3- Al-Kashsh¢, *Ikhtiy¡r Ma`rifat al-Rij¡l*, p. 525; Allamah al-Majlisi, *Bi¦¡r al-Anw¡r*, 68:166, H. 17.

Cordial and Practical Devotion to Almighty Allah

Another feature that distinguishes the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is devotion to Almighty Allah in practice and behavior as well as in emotions and feelings—at both individual and collective levels—which includes commitment to building good relationships with others in order to connect with Almighty Allah. In other words, followers of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) befriend people for Almighty Allah’s sake, shun others for the same sake, and keep themselves away from worldly attractions and carnal tendencies.

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have focused on this aspect, which expresses real religiousness and faith in the doctrinal commitments of a Muslim. They have laid down this aspect as a goal and objective for their followers. This has come in the form of traditions and discourses declaring this objective openly or expressing it as one of the practical commitments.

In his book of *al-K¡f¢*, Shaykh al-Kulayn¢ has reported through an authentic chain of authority that Ab£-`Ubaydah al-°adhdh¡' reported Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) as saying:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِلّه وَ أَبْغَضَ لِلّه وَ أَعْطَى لِلّه فَهُوَ مِمَّنْ كَمُلَ إِيمَانُهُ.

He who loves, hates, and gives for the sake of Allah actually enjoys perfect faith.[1]

According to another tradition, Imam al-B¡qir (‘a) is reported to have said:

وِدُّ الْمُؤْمِنِ فِي لِلّه مِنْ أَعْظَمِ شُعَبِ الإِيمَانِ. أَلاَ وَمَنْ

When a believer loves (others) for the sake of Almighty Allah, this will be one of the greatest

1- Al-°urr al-`Amil¢, *Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah*, 11:431, H. 1.

أَحَبَّ فِـــي ِاللّه وَ أَبْـغَـــضَ فِـي ِاللّه وَ أَعْطَى فِـــي ِاللّه وَمَـنَـعَ فِـي ِاللّه فَـهُـوَ مِـنْ أَصْفِـيَـاءِ ِاللّه.

parts of faith. Verily, he who loves, hates, gives, and withholds for the sake of Almighty Allah is one of His elite servants.[1]

Other traditions also express true faith and piety through love that is intended purely for Allah's sake. Fu¤ayl ibn Yas¡r reported that he asked Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) whether loving and hating for Allah's sake is part of faith. The Imam (‘a) answered:

وَ هَلِ الإِيـمَـانُ إلاَّ الْـحُبُّ وَ الـبُـغْضُ؟

Is true faith anything other than love and hate?

Then, the Imam (‘a) quoted the following Qur'¡nic verse to confirm his words:

چ چ چ چ ڇ ڇ ڇ ڇ ڍ ڍ ڌ ڌ ڎ ڎ ڈ ژ ژ ڑ ڑ ک

...Allah has endeared faith to you and has made it seemly in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you unbelief, transgression and disobedience; these are the followers of a right way. (49/7)[2]

Ab£-Ubaydah al-°adhdh¡' also reported that Imam al-B¡qir (‘a) said to him:

يَـا زِيَـادُ، وَيْـحَكَ! وَهَـلِ الـدِّيـنُ إلاَّ الْـحُـبُّ؟ أَلاَ تَـرَى قَـوْلَ ِاللّه تَـعَـالَـى:

O Ziyid, woe unto you! Is faith anything other than love? You should have considered Almighty Allah's saying (in the Holy Qur'¡n), "Say: If you love Allah, then follow

1- Al-°urr al-`Amil¢, *Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah*, 11:431, H. 3.

2- Al-°urr al-`Amil¢, *Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah*, 11:435, H. 16; Al-Barq¢, *al-Ma¦¡sin*, 1:409, H. 930, published by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly.

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

me, Allah will love you and forgive you your faults, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (3/31)"[1]

Acting as Excellent Exemplars

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have listed a number of features, the most important of which is to become excellent exemplars among people in both individual and social behavior. Because of the necessity of this feature, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have instructed their followers to be characterized by it; making it one of the goals of building a virtuous community.

This emphasis of the Holy Imams (‘a) that their followers be characterized by piety, godliness, sincerity, and constancy in worship can represent only one aspect of the many aspects of acting as excellent exemplars.

In view of this, the practical demonstration as excellent exemplars must be among the features that distinguish the Sh¢`ah from others. Moreover, the Holy Imams (‘a), through traditions, have matched this feature to their own attributes, since the Imams (‘a) have always been excellent exemplars.

`Umar ibn Ya¦y¡ is reported to have heard Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) saying:

1- Al-°urr al-`Amil¢, *Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah*, 11:435, H. 17; Al-Barq¢, *al-Ma¦¡sin*, 1:409, H. 931, published by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly.

إنَّ أحَقَّ النَّاسِ بِالْوَرَعِ آلُ مُحَمَّدٍ وَشِيعَتُهُمْ، كَيْمَا تَقْتَدِيَ الرَّعِيَّةُ بِهِمْ.

Verily, the first to be characterized by devoutness are the Household of Mu¦ammad (‘a) and their followers so that the people will pattern themselves after them.(1)

As has been previously cited, Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) is reported to have said:

فَإنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْكُمْ إذَا وَرِعَ فِي دِينِهِ وَصَدَقَ الْحَدِيثَ وَأدَّى الأمَانَةَ وَحَسَّنَ خُلُقَهُ مَعَ النَّاسِ قِيلَ هَذَا جَعْفَرِيٌّ، فَيَسُرُّنِي ذَلِكَ وَيَدْخُلُ عَلَيَّ مِنْهُ السُّرُورَ، وَقِيلَ هَذَا أدَبُ جَعْفَرٍ. وَاللّه لَحَدَّثَنِي أبِي عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ أنَّ الرَّجُلَ كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي القَبِيلَةِ مِنْ شِيعَةِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ فَيَكُونُ زَيْنَهَا، آدَاهُمْ لِلأَمَانَةِ، وَأقْضَاهُمْ لِلْحُقُوقِ، وَأصْدَقَهُمْ لِلْحَدِيثِ، إلَيْهِ وَصَايَاهُمْ

Verily, if one of you shows piety in his religious affairs, speaks nothing but the truth, and behaves politely towards the people, they will refer to him as belonging to Ja`far and they will say that this is the way Ja`far educates his followers. This will please me and fill me with delight. If one does the opposite, it is I who will be defamed and offended, since the people will say that Ja`far has educated his followers in this manner. I swear by Allah that my father (‘a) told me that a Sh¢`ite in a clan would be the best of its individuals, the most trustworthy, the most observant of their rights, and the most honest. The other individuals would always keep their wills and trusts with him, and when asked about him, they would answer that he was unmatched among them, since he was the most trustworthy and the

1- *Bish¡rat al-Mu¥§af¡*, p. 17.

وَوَدَائِعُهُمْ، تُسْأَلُ الْعَشِيرَةُ عَنْهُ فَتَقُولُ: مَنْ مِثْلُ فُلانٍ؟ إِنَّهُ آدَانَا لِلأَمَانَةِ وَأَصْدَقُنَا لِلْحَدِيثِ.

most honest.[1]

Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) is also reported as saying:

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ كَانُوا الْمَنْظُورَ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي الْقَبَائِلِ، وَكَانُوا أَصْحَابَ الْوَدَائِعِ، مَرْضِيِّينَ عِنْدَ النَّاسِ.

The companions of `Al¢ (‘a) were the most notable figures in their clans. They were also the most trustworthy and the most respected in the eyes of the people.[2]

According to another tradition, Sulaym¡n ibn Mahr¡n reported that he once visited Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) and found a group of Sh¢`ah listening to the Imam while he was instructing them by saying:

مَعَاشِرَ الشِّيعَةِ! كُونُوا لَنَا زَيْناً، وَلاَ تَكُونُوا عَلَيْنَا شَيْناً. قُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً، وَاحْفَظُوا أَلْسِنَتَكُمْ، وَكُفُّوهَا عَنِ الْفُضُولِ وَقُبْحِ الْقَوْلِ.

O groups of Sh¢`ah, represent us with fairness and do not represent us unbecomingly. Speak to men good words, withhold your tongues (from speaking evil), and desist from idle chat and foul language.[3]

1- Al-°urr al-`Amil¢, *Was¡'il al-Sh¢`ah* 8:398 H. 2.
2- Al-±abris¢, *Mishk¡t al-Anw¡r*, p. 63.
3- Shaykh al-±£s¢, *al-Am¡l¢*, p. 440, H. 987.

Steadfastness

The capability to withstand and undertake the great historical responsibility of steadfastness in order to achieve the major goals of Imamate must be found in the personalities of the individuals of the virtuous community, because without such qualities human perfection cannot be attained. Steadfastness includes commitment, self-control, keeping a confidence, patience, trust in Allah and reliance upon Him, self-sacrifice, courteous association with people, fulfillment of promises and trusts, practicing the noble manners of Islam, cognizance and a sound understanding of the historical conditions and events of Islam.

The virtuous community is in urgent need of these qualities to ensure endurance in the face of annihilation and spiritual and mental pressure exercised by the enemies against them; to confront social clashes, political changes, ethical and social problems; and to guarantee the continuity of the transmission of the message of Islam to the coming generations. To facilitate this, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) prepared, for their followers, multi-dimensional systems, regulations, special rules—such as *taqiyyah*—and a collective security system.[1] They also drafted certain systems of social association which include the spiritual, ethical, and cultural aspects of life. The Holy Imams (‘a) have considered compliance with these regulations to be one of the features that discriminate a Sh¢`ite individual from others.

Let us now mention some traditions that refer to the quality of steadfastness:

Ibn ¯adaqah has reported Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) as saying,

1- Later on we will discuss these aspects in further detail.

إمْتَحِنُوا شِيعَتَنَا عِنْدَ مَوَاقِيتِ الصَّلاَةِ كَيْفَ مُحَافَظَتُهُمْ عَلَيْهَا، وَإِلَى أَسْرَارِنَا كَيْفَ حِفْظُهُمْ لَهَا عِنْدَ عَدُوِّنَا، وَإِلَى أَمْوَالِهِمْ كَيْفَ مُوَاسَاتُهُمْ لإِخْوَانِهِمْ فِيهَا.

You can test our true followers (the Sh¢`ah) through their performing the prayers at the best time of prayer, keeping our secrets from our enemies, and taking their brethren-in-faith as partners in their wealth.[1]

Another tradition holds that Abul-Rab¢` al-Sh¡m¢ reported that he once visited Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a) and found his house full of attendants some of whom were from Khur¡s¡n and others from Syria and other districts. He could not find a place to sit. Then, Imam al-¯¡diq (‘a), who was leaning, sat erect and said:

يَا شِيعَةَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ! إعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَمْلِكْ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ غَضَبِهِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يُحْسِنْ صُحْبَةَ مَنْ صَحِبَهُ، وَمُخَالَفَةَ مَنْ خَالَفَهُ، وَمُرَافَقَةَ مَنْ رَافَقَهُ، وَمُجَاوَرَةَ مَنْ جَاوَرَهُ...

O Adherents of Mu¦ammad’s Household, know that they are not ours who do not control themselves when in rage, do not respect the association with their companions, associates, and parties, and do not oppose those opposed to them in a peaceful way.[2]

Maysir has reported Imam al-B¡qir (‘a) as saying to him, “O Maysir! May I introduce to you our true Sh¢`ah?”

1- Shaykh al-¯ad£q, *Qurb al-Isn¡d*, p. 78, H. 253; `All¡mah al-Majlis¢, *Bi¦¡r al-Anw¡r* 68:149, H. 1.

2- Ibn Shu`bah al-°arr¡n¢, *Tu¦af al-`Uq£l*, English version translated by Badr Shahin, p. 289.

Maysir said, “May I be your devoted servant! Please do.” The Imam (‘a) said:

إِنَّهُمْ حُصُونٌ حَصِينَةٌ، وَصُدُورٌ أَمِينَةٌ، وَأَحْلاَمٌ رَزِينَةٌ، لَيْسُوا بِالْمَذَايِيعِ الْبُذُرِ، وَلاَ بِالْجُفَاةِ الْمَرَائِينَ، رُهْبَانُ اللَّيْلِ، أُسْدُ النَّهَارِ.

They are strong fortresses, faithful hearts and restrained intellects. They do not hide the truth and are not vain or ostentatious. They are humble worshippers at night and courageous lions during the day.[1]

Imam al-B¡qir (‘a) is also reported to have said:

شِيعَتُنَا الْمُتَبَاذِلُونَ فِي وِلاَيَتِنَا، الْمُتَحَابُّونَ فِي مَوَدَّتِنَا، الْمُتَزَاوِرُونَ فِي إِحْيَاءِ أَمْرِنَا، الَّذِينَ إِذَا غَضِبُوا لَمْ يَظْلِمُوا، وَإِنْ رَضُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا، بَرَكَةٌ عَلَى مَنْ جَاوَرُوا، سِلْمٌ لِمَنْ

Our true Sh¢`ah are surely those who meet the needs of each other for the sake of (their loyalty to) our leadership, love each other for the sake of their love for us, and exchange visits for the sake of discussing our affairs. They neither wrong others when they are enraged nor exceed the limits when they are pleased. They are a blessing for their neighbors and peace for their associates.[2]

1- Al-±abris¢, *Mishk¡t al-Anw¡r*, p. 62, H. 298.
2- Ibn Shu`bah al-°arr¡n¢, *Tu¦af al-`Uq£l*, English version translated by Badr Shahin, p. 199.

خَـالَـطُـوا.

In previously mentioned traditions, we have come to know about the Holy Imams (‘a) approach of instructing and disciplining their followers to comply with high moral standards, emphasizing the quality of restoring trusts to their owners and fulfilling responsibilities. Such traditions can also be found in reference books of °ad¢th, especially chapters on appropriate relationships with others and enjoining that which is right. Furthermore, separate books have been written on such topics.[1]

Keeping the Entity Strongly Perfected

Relying upon divine support and upon the subjective capacities of the virtuous community, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) established a well-built, strong social entity that would be spiritually and morally capable of withstanding the impositions of tyrannical rulers on Muslim societies and the changing social conditions. This feature, which will be discussed in more detail in the coming books of this series, can be seen throughout the history of Islam and includes the following aspects:

First: The political system represents the system of adinistration, judicature, and issuance of verdicts. The well-versed jurisprudents (*mujtahids*) are required to undertake the responsibility of managing this system on the guidance of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). The Holy Imams (‘a) have formed this system so carefully that it corresponds with the general political system of the nation and, at the same time, enables the virtuous community to be independent and

1- More details about this topic will be presented in the coming chapters about spiritual aspects and the system of social relationships.

capable of undertaking their mission while avoiding falling prey to corrupt political conditions, such as, turning into tyrannical rulers.[1]

Second: The financial system of the virtuous community secures for them disbursements for general religious work inside the community. This system basically depends upon the religious dues headed by the taxes of *khumus* and *zak¡t*, which play a significant role in the maintenance and continuity of this community.[2]

Third: The establishment of cultural foundations, such as schools and seminaries that educate well-versed jurisprudents, propagators, and scholars specialized in religious sciences. Such schools have been invulnerable forts that shelter this virtuous community against collapse. Therefore, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have emphasized the duty of seeking knowledge and the necessity of dissemination of knowledge by the scholars. In this respect, Imam `Al¢ Am¢r al-Mu'min¢n (‘a) is reported as saying:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِعْلَمُوا أَنَّ كَمَالَ الدِّينِ طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْعَمَلُ بِهِ. أَلاَ وَإِنَّ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمِ أَوْجَبُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ طَلَبِ الْمَالِ. إِنَّ الْمَالَ مَقْسُومٌ مَضْمُونٌ لَكُمْ، قَدْ

O people! Beware that the perfection of religion depends upon acquiring knowledge and putting it into practice. It is more important for you to acquire knowledge than to collect wealth. Wealth has been distributed among you by the Just Lord. He has guaranteed it and He will keep His promise. However, He has stored

1- In coming books of this series, detailed discussion about this system of rule will be cited.

2- In the coming book, under the economic system of the virtuous community, this topic will be discussed in more detail.

knowledge in the hearts of some, and has ordered you to go forth to seek it from them.[1]

قَسَمَهُ عَادِلٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَمِنَهُ، وَسَيَفِي لَكُمْ. وَالْعِلْمُ مَخْزُونٌ عِنْدَ أَهْلِهِ، وَقَدْ أُمِرْتُمْ بِطَلَبِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ فَاطْلُبُوهُ.

Many traditions carry this emphasis on seeking knowledge:

Seeking knowledge is a religious duty.

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ.

Verily, Almighty Allah loves the seekers of knowledge.

أَلاَ إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ بُغَاةَ الْعِلْمِ.

One who exerts serious effort to seek knowledge will have the same reward as one who strives in the way of Allah.

إِنَّ الشَّاخِصَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ كَالْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ.

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (¥) is reported to have said:

Hold talks with each other, meet each other for study, and exchange discourses, because discourses refine hearts. Like swords, hearts are exposed to corrosion, and discourse is their refining polish.

تَذَاكَرُوا، وَتَلاَقَوْا، وَتَحَدَّثُوا: فَإِنَّ الْحَدِيثَ جَلاَءٌ لِلْقُلُوبِ. إِنَّ الْقُلُوبَ لَتَرِينُ كَمَا يَرِينُ السَّيْفُ؛ وَجَلاَؤُهَا الْحَدِيثُ.

Holding sessions and meetings to discuss the cultural and moral heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), their virtues, everyday matters and imperative affairs of the virtuous

1- Al-±abris¢, *Mishk¡t al-Anw¡r*, English version, p. 346, H. 713.

community are also necessary for strengthening the cultural aspect of this community.[1]

Fourth: Among the distinctive features of the virtuous community built by the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) is to take considerable interest in the assurance of financial resources for the virtuous community through two courses of action: trade and agriculture. These two courses procure a sort of economic protection against the influence of tyrannical rulers, persecution, pursuit, and sieges against the individuals of the virtuous community.

Numerous are the traditions that encourage commerce and agriculture. Some of these declare that nine tenths of sustenance lies in commerce.[2]

Standing by the Believers

Another distinctive feature of the virtuous community is the spirit of justice, mutual support, collaboration, joint liability and helping brethren-in-faith. This feature represents the covenant of allegiance among believers on which all relationships among individuals of the virtuous community depend, and through which their unity and adherence is achieved and points of weakness and defect dealt with. An individual might face isolation, siege, or insecurity because of certain social, economic or political conditions. However, such a spirit of allegiance will definitely come to his rescue.

Traditions convey the Ahl al-Bayt's verdict concerning the

1- A detailed discussion follows in the book concerning the cultural aspects of the virtuous community.
2- A detailed discussion follows in the chapter on the economic system of the virtuous community.

significance of this principle as one of the duties towards brothers-in-faith. This topic will be discussed in the coming book about the economic system and social relationships within the virtuous community. In this respect, Imam al-B¡qir (‘a) is reported as saying:

إنَّ مِنْ حَقِّ الْمُؤْمِنِ عَلَى أَخِيهِ الْمُؤْمِنِ أَنْ يُشْبِعَ جَوعَتَهُ، وَيُوَارِيَ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَيُفَرِّجَ عَنْ كُرْبَتِهِ، وَيَقْضِيَ دَيْنَهُ. فَإِذَا مَاتَ خَلَّفَهُ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَوِلْدِهِ.

The rights of a believer over another believer include: feeding him when he is hungry, clothing him when he is naked, rescuing him from trouble, paying off his debts, and taking care of his family after his death.[1]

Undertaking Public Responsibilities

The individuals of the virtuous community are characterized by their affection for all Muslims and assuming responsibility for the entire Muslim community. This feature has come from the Holy Imams’ (‘a) emphasis on the following principles:

(1) Enjoining that which is right, forbidding that which is wrong and striving hard for Allah’s sake. This principle means to resist wrong acts, oppression, and deviation.

(2) Mutual cooperation

(3) Helping each other

(4) Guiding each other

(5) Protecting the lives, possessions, and honor of the fraternity of believers

1- *Mishk¡t al-Anw¡r*, English version, p. 477, H. 1085.

(6) Coexisting with Muslims of all inclinations

In addition, the Holy Imams (‘a) emphasized many other principles that work together to help form the strong, fundamentally perfect system which will be discussed in greater detail in the coming books of this series.